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DICKENS: A SELF-PORTRAIT *By Stephen Leacock*

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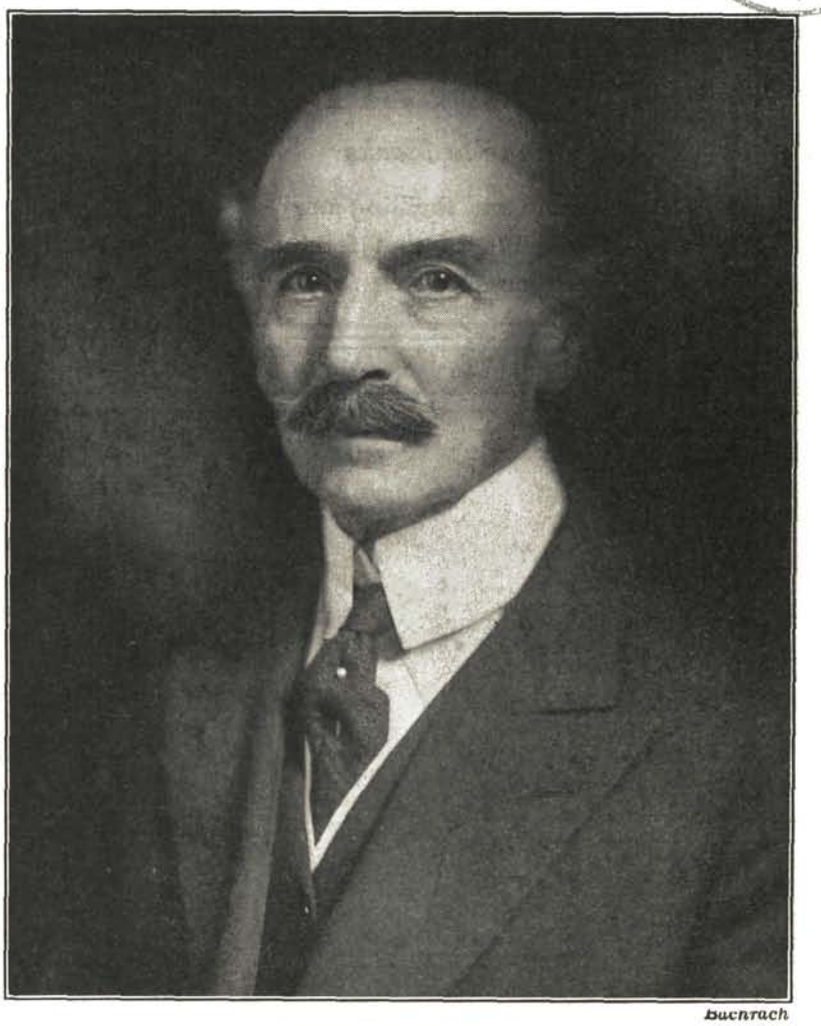

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(See page 11)

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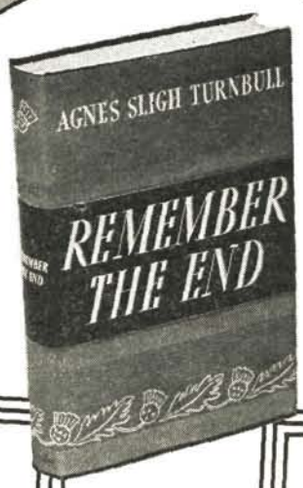

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Dickens: a Self-Portrait

BY

STEPHEN LEACOCK

"Not at home": Charles Dickens and his former American acquaintances (a contemporary caricature).

DICKENS was a voluminous, indeed a tireless, letter-writer. The letters in these volumes* by which Mr. Walter Dexter adds another to the conspicuous services already rendered to countless readers of Dickens, range over the years 1832 to 1870. The originals have been for years past slowly accumulating in private and public collections. They include the original letters in the British Museum, the letters to John Forster on which his life of Dickens was largely based, the letters in the library of Harvard University, the Pierpont Morgan Collection, the Forster Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum, the collection of the Comte de Suzannet in Lausanne, and in all no less than fifty-eight different "locations" of autographed letters and the earlier printed collections in which they have appeared. The letters number, says the editor, "many thousands." Apparently he didn't count them. They run about three to the page over more than 2500 pages.

It cannot be said that these letters shed much, if any, new light on the career or character of Charles Dickens. Such light, on a ground so long illuminated and so carefully searched, is scarcely to be expected. The omissions and the reticences of earlier collections—as of the letters published by John Forster and in the "selections" made by Dickens's sister-in-law and his daughter, have long since been bridged. Even before these volumes appeared we knew of Dickens's early passion for Maria Beadnell, and the disillusionment at his later meeting: his exaltation of her, for lovers' eyes, as the Dora of "David Copperfield" and his degradation of her, for the cynic's sneer, as the over-blown and giggling Flora of "Little Dorrit." We find here nothing new of the estrangement of Dickens from his wife and his self-righteous abandonment of her. Of what lay behind it we can only guess and reconstruct as before. There is nothing here to help us to solve the unsolved Mystery of Edwin Drood. Nothing to add to what we know of Charles Dickens's animosity to America. In short, there is nothing in these letters in the way of new disclosures or new literary sensations.

The charm of the volumes lies elsewhere. Their very comprehensiveness and completeness make them, for the lover of Dickens, a treasure house of interest through whose chambers we pass and repass careless of direction, reading at random—and finding as we read that there gathers around us a renewed memory of Dickens and the world of his fancy, a renewed realization of his greatness and his limitations.

One notes at the outset the form and style of the letters. Each one is a letter, in the good old Victorian sense, with completed periods and explicit sentences. Here is nothing of the gasping syncope of modern correspondence, impatient of a verb. If the letters are ever light and familiar, they take at once the literary form of lightness, an assumption of being written in a third character and with some pose or attitude of humor. It is as if Dickens wrote the letters to be read in public: perhaps he did: at first with the exuberant self-importance of youth, and later with the conscious sense, that he presently acquired, of being a national institution. Dickens, I think, largely lived in such an attitude. Genius no doubt has the right to do so.

Looking first on the negative side as to what the letters are not (since the disagreeable properly comes first in all discussion), one realizes in turning over the pages how greatly limited was Charles Dickens's outlook. How little will you find in all these volumes of any interest in the government and politics of the world about him, the rise and fall of causes and of nations, the struggle, at his very elbow, of light against darkness, of liberty and justice hoping to conquer the world—and almost, so it seemed at times, succeeding in its aim. Dickens knew nothing of this. To him foreigners in Europe were comic, foreigners in the United States were (mostly) cads, and government in England by the "ins" and the "outs," an amusing comedy which he had seen to satiety as a reporter in the House of Commons and satirized in the Pickwickian Eatanswill Election. What did history mean to Charles Dickens? Nothing in particular, except to gather up its horrors and feed on the sensation of them. In his "Child's History of England"—the name indicates its supposed purpose—he devotes a whole gloating page to the hideous burning of an aged bishop, as circumstantial as torture itself. In his journeys in France, among the tattered veterans of the Napoleonic wars, he can see nothing of the traces of the epic struggle: only comic characters with faded red ribbons on their coat lapels which they seem to value—queer old creatures—in some comic way of their own. For the America of 1867, his letters written during his second lecture tour convey not the faintest appreciation of the struggle through which the republic had just passed, the marks of which, of mingled honor and disaster, were all about his unseeing eyes. He speaks of Stanton (Lincoln's Secretary of War) whom he met in Washington as "celebrated for his knowledge of my [Dickens's own] works"! Even the Negroes, whose slavery had raised him to abstract fury twenty-six years before, no longer interest his mind. Their civility has gone.

The truth is that Dickens lived in the peculiar complacency of Victorian England. He was, as everybody knows, filled with righteous indignation. It was indeed, as the French would say, his métier: righteous indignation over debtors' pris-

* *THE LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS. Edited by Walter Dexter. Three Volumes. The Nonesuch Press.* 1938.

Next Week

PICTURES AND CENSORSHIP
By BEN RAY REDMAN

DR. NORTON'S WIFE
By MILDRED WALKER
Reviewed by Mabel S. Ulrich

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ons, over Yorkshire schools, over the law's delay, the insolence of office, and the suffering of the poor. He wanted people, other people, to be better and kinder. But it never occurred to him to question the fundamental things like property, inheritance, and the majesty of British institutions. Individual suffering hurt him to his soul. But collective outcry, gatherings of ragged people, tumults of despair, were either comic or dangerous. His outlook never went beyond a middle-class drawing room. His religion he kept, as did his class, in a sealed compartment, using Our Savior as a metaphor, not a reality.

So too was his attitude, or his lack of it, towards the movement of science. He lived in a world which the rise of scientific knowledge was already beginning to transform. The foundations of belief were being shaken, the pillars of the temple were about to fall. Out of the heavier, duller environment of tradition and belief, of social stagnation and spiritual security, was already breaking the world we know—mobile, technical, restless, fierce in its aspirations and strangling in its own strength. You will look in vain in these letters for any indication of a realization on the part of Dickens of what was happening in the world of science and intellect.

Portrait by Maclise

Mrs. Dickens: "Dickens's separation from his wife [is] still imperfectly explained" . . .

What is there then in the letters? Dickens—just that all through—Charles Dickens and his own life and his own work. And it is better so. If Dickens had been obsessed with the French "Revolution of July"—one recalls Mr. Jingle's error about its date—he wouldn't have written "Pickwick." If the Crimean War had meant anything in particular to him, he wouldn't have written Dombey. To do his work he had to be segregated into a world all of his own—and his work was worth it. This elimination from external things was needed for his strange transforming genius that converted the people about him into Pickwicks and Bumbles—or rather opened the eyes of his fellowmen to the reality they could not see.

There is always something which appears in the opening career of all people, even of those who turned out not to have had any: and especially an interest in the opening years of those destined to be great. One turns to the letters of Dickens as between 1832 where the collection begins and 1836 when the sudden glory of Pickwick transformed his life. Here we have Dickens, twenty years old, a reporter in the House of Commons gallery, writing newspaper articles, beginning (Dec. 1833) the first of his Sketches, as Boz, writing little operettas and desperately in love with Maria Beadnell, and sufficiently out of it again to get married to Catherine Hogarth. Here we have all the ardent hopes, the eagerness of youth, intensified to raise it to the level of Charles Dickens. To Maria Beadnell he writes—the date is May 19, 1833—"I never have loved and I never can love any human creature breathing but yourself." The words no doubt were old when Rome was young, but Dickens seems to force new life into them. Here is a letter that recalls to us the background of known adversity which enabled Dickens to consign Mr. Pickwick to the Fleet and to cast on Mr. Dorrit the shadow of the Marshalsea wall. "On waking this morning" (the letter was marked "Friday 1834": Dickens was always careful of the day but careless of the month), "I have been informed that my father has just been arrested by Shaw and Maxwell the quondam wine people. Will you have the goodness the moment you receive this to go over . . . and ascertain whether anything can be done."

The letters that follow enable us to piece together the genesis of "Pickwick." Here is the famous letter (Feb. 10, 1836) to Dickens's fiancée, Catherine Hogarth, in which he writes that Chapman and Hall "have made me an offer of *£14 a month* to write and edit a new publication. . . . The work will be no joke but the emolument is too tempting to resist." A week later Dickens has finished Chapter I, writes that "Pickwick is at length begun in all his might and glory," signs himself "in Pickwickian haste"—the first known use of the adjective. The "Pickwick Papers," as all Dickens scholars know, failed to attract and flag. The entry of Sam Weller (in No. 4 of the Papers, July 1836) saves them. Dickens writes "in great capitals PICKWICK TRIUMPHANT." Henceforth the success of Pickwick is phenomenal. Yet there seems to have been a loss of interest in the autumn, as Dickens writes to his publishers: "I am well aware of the lingering disease under which Mr. Pickwick has recently labored. . . . Spirits are not to be forced up to the Pickwick point every day. . . . If I were to live a hundred years and write three novels in each of them I should never be so proud of any of them as I am of 'Pickwick'." Then came the immortal climax of the story and smothered all criticism in an avalanche of success.

The letters that follow the success of "Pickwick," 1836 to 1842, show us Dickens on the flood tide of success, writing three novels at once, editing, dramatizing—an avidity for work and a rapidity in its execution that led to the famous warning of the *Quarterly* that he had gone up like a rocket and might come down like a stick. "The *Quarterly* notice," writes Dickens (Oct. 1837) to his legal friend Talfourd (Tommy Traddles of Copperfield), "contains a good deal I know to be true." Yet he can't resist saying that Hayward (the writer) "has rather visited on me his recollection of my declining his intimate acquaintance." He adds—"I may truly say that no writer ever had less vanity than I have"—a statement at which even a proof-reader might laugh.

The first volume contains also the epistolary record of Dickens's first tour to America—his delight over Boston, his exuberance turned to satiety, his radicalism destroyed by American "vulgarity," his fierce anger against (unseen) slavery, his hopeless failure to grasp the wonderful epic meaning of pioneer settlement—Dickens become a snobbish cockney in the Wilderness—his unmannerly quarrel over copyright: all this is familiar ground. For the times his feeling had all the rancorous bitterness of a man hurt deep in his soul and in his pocket. "It is impossible for any man," wrote Dickens (Sept. 6, 1843) after his return, "to know what the Americans are in their own country who has not seen them there." But the record is familiar to all readers of Mr. Wilkins's "Charles Dickens in America."

The second volume of letters (1847-1857) shows us Charles Dickens at the acme of his reputation and success. The world is at his feet. His novels in rapid succession vie with one another in popularity and profit. The writing of "David Copperfield" (1850) is generally taken as representing the full reach of his literary genius. Amateur theatricals became a feature of his social life, beckoning him to the public platform. The fiasco of his editorship of a daily newspaper (1846) was followed by a magazine editorship, an activity which followed him, and partly pushed him, to his grave.

Dickens's letters are filled with the record of these activities and of the trips abroad (Boulogne, Switzerland, Genoa, Paris) which served as intermissions. But, as said, Dickens's letters reflect hardly anything of the life of Europe about him, except its picturesque scenery and its droll people. He is busy all the time with voluminous correspondence with W. H. Wills (his sub-editor of *Household Words*): he reads masses of contributors'

(*Continued on page* 16)

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The Labor Movement

AMERICAN LABOR. By Herbert Harris. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1938. $3.75.

Reviewed by ROBERT R. R. BROOKS

HERBERT HARRIS has done a beautiful job. He has written a book which labor students will find useful, lay readers will find informative, and both will find fascinating. In form the book is almost unique. It devotes its first ninety-five pages to a brilliant summary of the history of the labor movement from its beginnings to the fall of the Knights of Labor. There follow two hundred and fifty pages delineating the identifying characteristics of seven different unions or union groups. The book is brought to a close by eighty pages of description of the recent labor scene.

The early historical material is presented in a style which is racy but powerful and polished. Occasional lapses into journalistic stereotypes—"Cæsar of the market place, he came, he saw, he conquered"—are swept along in a magnificent parade of institutions, parties, personalities, incidents, and movements set against a well sketched background of industrial and social developments. Familiar historical material takes on a new freshness. Ancient doings and sayings assume a modern significance. "In the midst of the most ample means to create wealth, all are in poverty," says Robert Owen in 1818—as though addressing a meeting of LaFollette Progressives in 1938.

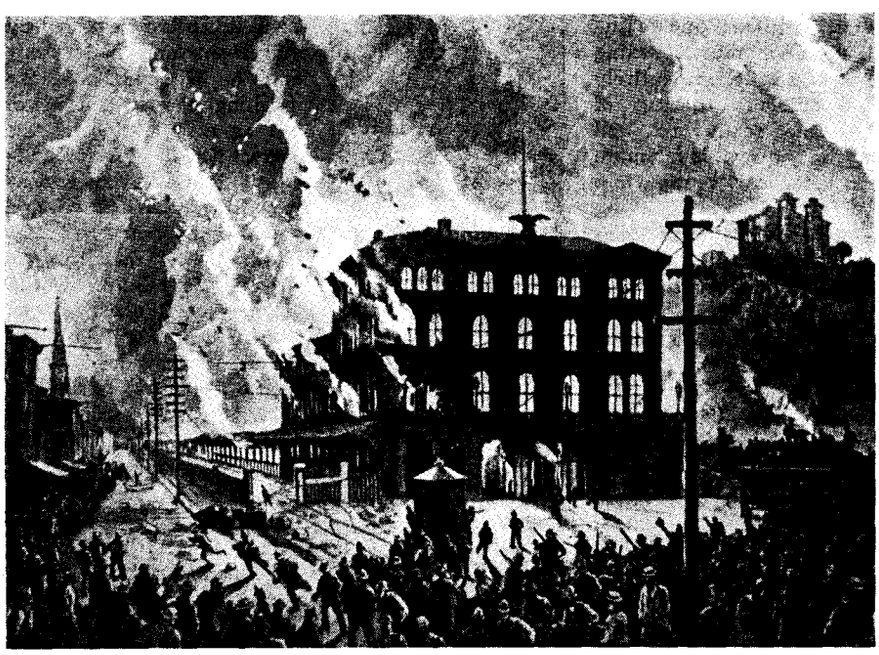
In the central block of material on individual unions lies the major contribution of Mr. Harris's book to the literature of the labor movement. Much American labor history suffers from too much unity and too little particularism. It is difficult to escape from the impression given by many historians that the labor movement is a great river swimming along between the banks of time which are conveniently labeled at intervals, 1792, 1827, 1837, 1886, 1919, 1937. Harris photographs a scene in which there are many streams, some rough, some placid, some doggedly flowing uphill, others leaping over precipices and escaping into vapor, a few murky and polluted. The emphasis on diversity of union behavior which Harris achieves by taking one union at a time from its origin to the present is startling. Each union or group from the miners and carpenters through the Newspaper Guild, the ladies' garment workers and the railroad unions to the automobile workers and "Trouble is the Word for Textiles" appears as the result of its own particular set of social, geographic, and industrial circumstances. Each group develops its own modes of behavior ranging from the health center of the garment workers to the corruption and racketeering of some of the building trades. The personalities, philosophies, racial origins, industrial techniques, social settings, and tactics of each union are selected and arranged to present an artistic impression of individuality.

The story of each union, moreover, serves as the vehicle for a different aspect of industrial life. The history of garments bears an account of collective order imposed on competitive chaos by union-management coöperation. Textiles serve to introduce the I.W.W. and the distantly related scene from which Big Bill Haywood emerged. Out of coal come the Molly Maguires, John Mitchell, Mark Hanna, Teddy Roosevelt, Morgan the Elder, John L. Lewis, the C.I.O., the Guffy-Vinson Act, and implications of national economic planning. Automobiles revive vivid memories of sit-downs, incipient Mid-West "revolution," and governmental intervention on the side of law and order which, for once at least, left no dead or wounded on the battlefield. The Newspaper Guild introduces the predicament of the white collar workers and the publishers' conception of "Free Speech." Six times Mr. Harris retraces his steps into the past without ever a hint of repetition in the return route. The success of this technique is based in part upon the fundamental dissimilarity of the material in each industry, in part upon the range of Mr. Harris's information, in part upon his artistic selection and emphasis, and in part upon his journalistic skill. Let anyone who seeks an almost cinematic use of the "throw-back" technique in literary form consult Mr. Harris's devices for introducing and closing the thumbnail biography of David Dubinsky.

The eighty pages of the author's "conclusion" are less a conclusion than a tightly packed, perhaps overcrowded, account of recent events. Picking up the introductory historical material almost where he left off, Mr. Harris tears through dozens of issues and events ranging from the organization of Negroes, the National Labor Relations Act, the Wages and Hours Act, and the political program of both the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O., to the anti-union policies of the National Association of Manufacturers and the emergence of the Congress of Industrial Organization from the Committee for Industrial Organization in November, 1938.

Robert R. R. Brooks, author of "When Labor Organizes," teaches economics at Williams College.

Herbert & Huesgen
Herbert Harris



"The Great Strike"—Destruction of the Union Depot and Hotel at Pittsburgh. Drawing by Fred B. Schell for *Harper's Weekly*, reproduced in "American Labor."

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Economics on a Sound Track

CAPITALISM IN CRISIS. By James Harvey Rogers. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by PAUL H. DOUGLAS

PROFESSOR ROGERS seeks to make economic truths more palatable by devoting nearly half of his little book to the "sound-track" technique of John Dos Passos and in letting a babel of voices convey the confusion which has characterized so much of the public mind during the last six years. He deserves credit for trying to make his fellow creatures wiser by gilding his philosophic pills. Unfortunately, however, he is only mildly successful in his method, since much of the uproar which he reflects bears little direct connection with the weaknesses of the capitalist system which he discloses nor with the remedies which he suggests. While his book is therefore distinctly interesting, it does not have that inner unity which is the first requisite of any work of art.

To Mr. Rogers, the primary difficulty with modern capitalism is that in a large number of industries, the constituent firms have price-fixing agreements which often make the sum total of the price tags on goods exceed the total monetary purchasing power in the pockets of the public. While the goods could be moved and relatively full employment maintained if the firms would only lower prices in a comparable degree with costs, it is just this which business in general refuses to do. In order to maintain unit price, most firms instead choose to close down their factories, thus initiating the cumulative process of breakdown.

This pegging of prices in the face of falling costs was accompanied, in an earlier phase of the cycle, by an expansion of profits. Had these profits been really reinvested, demand for some time at least would have been balanced. Following Keynes, however, the author points out that these savings were not actually reinvested in industry by the banks, and were instead partially held as idle cash balances and hence did not build up employment in the capital goods industries to compensate for the unemployment created by the price-pegging policy. The remedy, Mr. Rogers believes, lies in business's either reducing its prices or actually increasing its investments. If it does neither, then the government must step in to foster investments and make their total equal to savings.

In addition, the author favors a flexible program of public expenditures which others, including the present reviewer, have advocated for over a decade. This would call for a government budget which would be approximately balanced over a major cycle as a whole, but which would call for:—(1) increasing public expenditures during periods of depression when private expenditures contract, and meeting the resulting deficit by borrowing additional monetary purchasing power from the banks; and (2) decreasing public expenditures during periods of prosperity as private activity expands and using the surplus to retire the bonds previously issued.

Mr. Rogers also advocates the abolition of the new trade barriers which the states have recently been erecting against each other; the creation of an "era of good feeling" among labor, business, and government; and a social reform program to improve the position of the masses which would center upon the provision of more adequate medical care for the people. All of this is sound, and if influential business men can be attracted to Mr. Rogers's work by his unorthodox literary technique, the coming of these forward steps will be hastened.

Paul H. Douglas is associate professor of industrial relations in the University of Chicago.

Left Handed's Story

SON OF OLD MAN HAT, A NAVAHO AUTOBIOGRAPHY. By Left Handed. Recorded by Walter Dyk, with an introduction by Edward Sapir. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1938. $3.50.

Reviewed by OLIVER LAFARGE

HERE is something new and real. Here is, incidentally, a book which quietly smashes the dehydrated concepts of scientists and the myths of sentimentalists alike, and does it delightfully, since the author has no wish to be devastating, but merely to tell the truth. (I am referring to Left Handed, the subject of his autobiography, as the author, and to Dr. Dyk as the recorder.) Be the central figure white, red, yellow, black, or sky-blue-pink, a totally honest autobiography by a man to whom it is simply natural to be honest, without any exhibitionism or muscle-flexing urge to startle, an entirely unselfconscious telling of what one really did and thought and saw, is far more than rare, it is pretty close to unique.

Son of Old Man Hat: "the Navajos emerge as no white man has been able to portray them"...

Out of such a work there are bound to emerge living characters, vivid and illuminating incidents, endless touches to delight the reader, granting that the author himself has quality, as this one has. His "father" Old Man Hat, his "mother" Abaa, Slim Man, Comes Out in Anger, himself, and many others, remain real, remain people; the reader has been carried across the chasm of race and custom to that encounter with human universals which makes literature.

At the same time the Navajos emerge as no white man has ever been able to portray them, free-minded, quarrelsome, cursing, endlessly generous, vivacious and strong in their emotional responses, affectionate, sociable, independent, baldly frank about sex but not preoccupied with it, while unexpressed but constant through the whole story runs the strong love and respect between a boy growing up and his parents.

Material as grand as this deserves the best of handling; a really proper presentation can make the difference between an interesting book and a great one, and here Dr. Dyk's rendering balances on the line between success and failure. Left Handed speaks no English. Dr. Dyk took down the story as it fell from the lips of an interpreter. In the main he has rendered his material in simple, competent English not too far removed from the feeling of Navajo, but there are all too many exceptions. The average Indian interpreter speaks faulty English, further degraded by vulgarisms and bad grammar. As Western idiom, the resulting speech has vigor, but as a rendering of the correct Navajo of Left Handed, it is not even caricature. More startling, and equally unnecessary, is the lavish use of the strongest of our four-letter words. Navajos are frank about sex; it is not shocking to them, wherefore they do not need by-words or pet names for its aspects. The words Left Handed used had, for him, no startling quality, but Dr. Dyk's translations slap at the reader. Dr. Dyk has done a good job, he has subordinated himself to his material, and appreciated it. It would take so little revision to make his handling fully worthy of Left Handed's story.

Oliver LaFarge is the author of "Laughing Boy," a novel of Navajo life.

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A Detached View of D. H. Lawrence

THE LIFE OF D. H. LAWRENCE. By Hugh Kingsmill. New York: Dodge Publishing Company. 1938. $2.75.

Reviewed by ERNEST BOYD

AFTER the outpourings of the various frustrated devotees of D. H. Lawrence, Mr. Kingsmill's biography comes like a breath of fresh air. It is a pleasure to see the facts with his clear eyes after looking through the distorted glasses of Brett, Middleton Murry, Catherine Carswell, and Mabel Dodge Luhan. Mr. Kingsmill is not a debunker; he writes with sympathy and understanding, but he does bring that clean common sense and intellectual detachment to his subject which those others, for various reasons, lacked.

Lawrence was the quintessential "Mamma's boy," with pathological overtones. Mr. Kingsmill analyzes this bias in favor of his mother, shows how his unfairness to his father defeated itself, and how the whole course of his life was deflected and distorted by this psychic trauma in conjunction with his physical disabilities. "Much mothered children soon attract support and encouragement," he writes. "Lawrence . . . was helped in one way or another throughout his career. His attitude towards those who helped him was ungracious. He took what they did for him as his due, and was bitter about them when they were unwilling or unable to serve him any longer." Friends and admirers as devoted as Ford Madox Ford and Edward Garnett, who were indispensable in guiding and launching him, could not escape falling into disfavor. His moral cowardice was such that, while he was imploring Frieda to leave her husband, he refused to shoulder any responsibility in the matter and left her to face the struggle alone. No wonder Frieda wrote a skit about him called "Paul Morel, or His Mother's Darling," which failed to amuse the humorless author of "Sons and Lovers."

"Lawrence's friends usually disliked, and frequently loathed, one another," says Mr. Kingsmill, as he probes into the endless jealousies, quarrels, and reconciliations which they themselves have so candidly revealed. It is all rather grim and silly, without even the possible justification of extreme adolescence. The author of "Lady Chatterley's Lover" and "The Rainbow," one is not surprised to hear, was such a prude that he objected to a faintly suggestive little French song that Katherine Mansfield sang at a Christmas party. As Mr. Kingsmill rather neatly puts it: "The obscenity in 'Lady Chatterley' is of the painstaking, unimaginative kind which was inseparable from the nature of the book, whether one accepts Lawrence's view of it as a tract to teach the young idea how to shoot, or regards it as his attempt to assert his manhood . . ."

Mr. Kingsmill has a pretty touch when it comes to characterizing some of Lawrence's precious friends. Thus, Mabel Dodge: "Anything that could stimulate her always cordial interest in herself attracted her. She had many acquaintances among writers and artists, but psychoanalysts and soul doctors generally were her special interest. . . ." Elsewhere he dissects the relations between Aldous Huxley and Lawrence. "The common ground between Huxley and Lawrence was their hatred of life. . . . Both of them felt isolated from ordinary experience, and were forced by their very repugnance to life into idealizing it."

Mr. Kingsmill's book is the first entirely sane study of D. H. Lawrence. It is critical without being unfair, witty without being too malicious. It should be required reading for all the fans who have hitherto accepted the idolators at their face (or title-page) value. His conclusion is that "Lawrence was not a conscious charlatan, but he had an instinct for exploiting the large areas of imbecility in the English upper classes."

Enlarged Horizons

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE POETRY OF RAINER MARIA RILKE. By M. D. Herter Norton. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by LOUIS UNTERMEYER

RAINER MARIA RILKE, probably the greatest German poet since Mörike, was born, by a geographical irony, in Prague and died in Switzerland. Until recently, Rilke's admirers were the fervent few; his distinction threatened to be that of the "poet's poet"; not a line of his is to be found in Vesper's popular two-volume compilation, "Die Ernte seit Goethe." Yet Rilke, who died in 1926 at the age of fifty-one, was forty-eight when Vesper's anthology appeared, and practically all his poetry had been published and appraised. Slowly the rare essence of this poet has revealed itself. It has manifested itself in poems that explore the world beyond consciousness without losing hold of reality, tracing the wavering line between sensuousness and intuition. Rilke's tales have a similar sensitivity; "Stories of God" are an extension of "Das Marienleben" rather than a departure from that already classic work. A half-mystical, half-casual vision, a kind of simple clairvoyance, emanates from both the prose and verse.

The appearance of four of Rilke's volumes in English, including the searching "Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge," translated as "The Journal of My Other Self," is due to the industry and devotion of M. D. Herter Norton. The translator has set herself a harder task in the present volume, which is a selection of some seventy-five poems from various

Rainer Maria Rilke: "his distinction threatened to be that of the 'poet's poet' " . . .

books, ranging from Rilke's fairly conventional "First Poems" to the irregularly rhymed lines of his maturity. Although Rilke was Heine's opposite in most ways, both poets used a deceptively simple vocabulary and both luxuriated in disguised, almost double, meanings. On the whole, the translator has succeeded admirably; the English is precise but graceful, the phrases have color and clarity.

But—and every translation is subject to the unpleasant and inevitable "but"—it is a pity that the translator has seen fit to discard rhyme throughout. "Rhyme," according to the foreword, "seems to me to belong to the more *technical* elements of form." This is, at least, a debatable matter. But, in Rilke, more than in most poets, the rhyme is an integral part of the poetic language, even a contributing part of the symbol and its overtone. It has always seemed to me that a translator should, somehow, strike a balance between literal meaning and sheer music. My own practice in the craft may make me a biased commentator, but I maintain that much, if not most, of the quality of a word-musician like Rilke is lost when the subtleties of sound are sacrificed for the sense. The result, even in this careful collection, is often neither good verse nor elevated prose. A poem like the sentimental "Der Bach hat leise Melodien." for example, demands the musical punctuation of rhyme; without it, one gets such awkward verbiage and fatal dullness as:

> The wood is wild, the world is wide,
> my heart is clear and big;
> pale solitude is holding
> my head upon her lap.

Apart from the purely sensual defects, this is a volume for which students of contemporary literature should be grateful. It not only increases our knowledge of Rilke, it enlarges our horizons.

Mr. Untermeyer is the author of a recent biography of Heine.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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Shaw on the Screen

ACCUSTOMED as we are to see our favorite plays and novels changed, romanticized, provided with happy endings, and otherwise prettied up for the movies, it nevertheless came as a shock to hear that the uncompromising, the intransigent Bernard Shaw had not only permitted the conclusion of "Pygmalion" to be altered, but had actually performed the operation himself. After holding out for twenty years against all offers for motion picture rights, he finally made his own adaptation of "Pygmalion"—for production in England, not Hollywood—and he has expressed himself as being more than satisfied with the result.

But no sooner was the picture released than word got about that Mr. Shaw has now allowed his Pygmalion (Henry Higgins) to fall in love with his Galatea (Eliza Doolittle) after all. Henry Higgins, his most unbending and imperturbable hero! You will recall that in the printed version of the play, Mr. Shaw wrote that it required not so much a preface as a sequel; and in the sequel he explicitly denounced those sentimentalists who would have Higgins marry Eliza. Higgins, he said, was not the marrying kind; what happened was that Eliza married Freddie Eynsford-Hill and set herself up in a florist's shop, and Higgins went his own independent way.

So we went to the movie of "Pygmalion" prepared for disillusionment. What, we rhetorically demanded, will become of all our ideas about characterization, if an author who has created a certain character once and for all decides later in life to revise his creation and make him over into a different character? We are accustomed to regard the successfully projected figures of fiction and drama as enjoying an independent life of their own, apart from the author, and certainly apart from the author's afterthoughts. This ability to create independent life is supposed to be one of the important values of imaginative literature. Henry Higgins, to be sure, is not among the great characters of modern drama; he is not even one of Shaw's best characters; but he has a special flavor, and—as it always appeared—a special relationship with Shaw. We did not want to see his metamorphosis.

Well, we have been to the movie, and we are obliged to admit that in spite of the altered denouement, Henry Higgins has not changed, which means that Shaw has not changed. We agree with Mr. Shaw that it is an excellent movie. It has the Shaw flavor, the Shaw bite; it preserves the point and the best part of the dialogue of the play. And it does something else much more important. The last time we saw "Pygmalion" on the stage, in the Theatre Guild production a few years ago, it had just faintly begun to date. It had ceased to be quite the mordant, contemporary satire which it had seemed to us when we first saw it (at seventeen); it was on the way to becoming a nostalgic memory. But "Pygmalion" in the motion picture version does not date. A few slight elisions, a few minor changes of phraseology (the substitution of "slang" for "small talk") have made all the difference. And probably the changed ending has contributed to the rejuvenation. The point of "Pygmalion" was—to put it in its most platitudinous form—that class distinctions are artificial; that they can be overcome in six months by any one who studies phonetics. That was a good point to make in 1908, fresh, lively, and original; but in 1938 everybody knows it; in the American 1938 of Mr. Coster, even the study of phonetics is superfluous.

To rejuvenate "Pygmalion," then, its emphasis has to be shifted—ever so subtly—from the point to the personalities. That is what has been done, with a skill that never shows the cutting, with a feeling of faithfulness to the original which ought to satisfy every one as much as it satisfies Mr. Shaw. And now, we want Mr. Shaw to make some more movies. There are other plays than "Pygmalion" which have abundant life but have begun to date on the surface. Possibly nothing can be done with the plays which date *in toto*, like "Getting Married," "Overruled," and "Misalliance." Certainly not a line should be altered in the best plays—in "Cæsar and Cleopatra," "Candida," "The Devil's Disciple," "Saint Joan." But take the conventions of 1905 out of "Man and Superman" and it would make even a better movie than "Pygmalion"; and think what could be done with "Major Barbara" by removing the Salvation Army and playing up the munitions manufacturer! Suggestions like these may horrify some of the older Shavians. Nevertheless, we should rather see Mr. Shaw bringing his older plays to life than writing more new ones like "On the Rocks" and "Too True to Be Good."

Old Christmas

BY JESSE STUART

WHEN I walked out across the snow
I heard the cattle low and low.

And there they stood around the barn,
Pawing the snow to keep them warm.

These long-haired cattle in the glow
Of yellow sun and bluejohn snow.

Murt says to me: "Alf, there's the moon,
You'd better feed the cattle soon."

"So strange but there's the moon," says I,
"The moon and sun both in the sky."

"Though it is early for the moon,
I'll go and feed the cattle soon."

The sun went down behind a cloud;
The frosty wind blew cold and loud.

The sun went down, the barn was lost;
The earth looked like a graveyard ghost.

And I went back, went in a hurry;
Was blinded by the big snow flurry.

Says I: "Murt, you're contrary!"
Says she: "It's twelfth of January!"

"This day Lord Jesus first saw light,
Was not on no December night.

"Folks got it wrong—this was the day—
Alf, have you fed the milk cows hay?"

We listen'd to the yearlings low;
We listen'd to the roosters crow.

Murt says: "That proves it is a fact
Way chickens and the cattle act!

"It was the twelfth of January
That's why we have this big snow flurry."

Yes, wind is wind, a fact's a fact;
I put the rag back in the crack.

'Pears like it chilled my blood, the wind;
That wind that kept a-coming in.

And Murt she says: "The alders leaf,
Because it's Christ's birthday they leaf.

"My mother's mother said she knew
That, that was why the alders grew.

"Nothing like that in old December.
Now just think back, do you remember?"

When this was over I went out
And stretched my arms and stirred about.

I fed the milk cows forks of hay
To calm them in a sort of way.

I called the chickens to the crib
And shelled them corn to stop their gib.

And when I went to slop the pigs
I found the leafed-out alder twigs.

So green and pretty in the snow.
After the storm in sunset glow.

I had to stop and shed some tears
The way folks slander Christ these years.

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Letters to the Editor: *Political Implications of Steffens's Letters*

Interpreting Steffens

SIR:—Since John Chamberlain chose to write of the political implications in Lincoln Steffens's "Letters" and his life, I think some of the confusions and false interpretations in his article should be pointed out. Those which touch on underlying philosophical differences of outlook —or differences of philosophical outlook —are too long to discuss here. But where Chamberlain misinterprets Steffens to bolster up his own views, I think it is fair and important to point out his misconceptions.

It does not matter whether one regards Steffens's feeling, the last years of life, that he had found an answer to the evils he spent a lifetime investigating, as "tragedy" or triumph. What is evident from even a cursory reading of the "Letters," is that he neither "closed his mind" nor embraced any "dogma." Had he closed his mind "hard" there would scarcely have come to his door, as there did in his latter years, a continuous stream of people of all political complexions — Epics, technocrats, communists, believers in Social credit, Utopians, single taxers, Republicans, Democrats, New and Old Dealers —whether students, teachers, businessmen, personnel men, politicians, writers, industrialists, philosophers or scientists— to discuss and listen to his views and ideas. They could have read Marxian dogma if that was all he gave them.

Mr. Chamberlain commits one sin I think unworthy of a person of his powers: he says Steffens stood for communism, and then he defines communism in his own way, quite arbitrarily. Certainly Lincoln Steffens did not stand for John Chamberlain's conception of communism. That would be clear to even a superficial reader of the "Letters." I think Mr. Chamberlain could well leave to professional confusers—those who dare not see clearly—that particular intellectual sin.

Steffens's letters over a period of seven or eight years discuss from many points of view just what he admired about the Soviet Union, and those principles he saw being carried out in that economy which he believed applicable in the United States. He may have been wrong, but that doesn't appear to me "confused," "mixing values," a "parable," nor "hitting off-center." It is, curiously enough, when Steffens grows most clear, most aware that he is seeing a possibility of a way out, and most precise in his reasoning as to why it is a way out, that Chamberlain condemns him.

Steffens did not advocate the employer-state. He wanted the removal of economic privilege. If, it seemed to him, the only method *so far invented by human beings* to reach this desirable end, were the use of economic coercion on those opposed to the desired end for the time being, it would have to be used for the time being. He did not say that was eternally the only way or could be eternally the only way. What he said was that no one, not even Mr. Chamberlain, had invented any other way yet. Again and again Steffens quoted Lenin to the effect that it would be a generation before a communist state produced *one* communist; and again and again he quoted the Russian leaders to the effect that they did not have a communist state yet.

"I think it's very encouraging. They're much sorrier than *The Atlantic Monthly* was."

Steffens never looked for a "group that dared to strike for the total power" (whatever that may mean). He thought that Mussolini had discovered something: that people didn't want to attend to the daily details of municipal and state administration: that they preferred to "let George do it"; and that therefore there was "an empty throne in every country" (as Mussolini said). What Steffens remarked on was that Mussolini, believing this and wanting the total power, acted on his belief and took that throne. I remember his pleading in a talk on his return to the USA in 1927: "You called me a communist when I reported on Bolshevik Russia; you call me a fascist now that I report on Fascist Italy. Next year I'm going to China; when I come back from there, please don't call me a Chinaman."

Steffens's biggest lesson, which he had laboriously learned and which he tried to teach those last years, was that what you did had an entirely different significance *according to when you did it.* John Chamberlain could consult the paragraphs which discuss why, if one is speaking of values, it is important to ask "When?" Steffens was enormously interested in that question, and never ceased to think about it, talk about it, measure it in the light of the body of facts and observations he had gathered. If it seemed necessary, at one point in human history, to seize the total power temporarily in order to make a world in which everyone would finally have opportunities, and if no other method was apparently available to human ingenuity at that time, Steffens preferred that seizure of power to the slow—or rapid—degradation and demoralization of human life we witness now. That choice he stated as clearly as possible in his introduction to Billinger's "Fatherland." I do not think it should become a political weapon for those who do not share Lincoln Steffens's beliefs, to twist them into unrecognizable form, and then deplore that he held them.

ELLA WINTER.

Los Angeles, Cal.

Mr. Chamberlain Replies

SIR:—I don't know why Ella Winter is arguing with me. She objects to my statement of Lincoln Steffens's final position—and then goes on to state that position as I understand it to be, and as I thought I had stated it for *The Saturday Review.* I've talked with a number of people who went to Steffens for advice in his last years. They all came away with the same answer: "Let the Communists head up the United—or Popular—Front." Liberals, he said, were incapable of achieving "it." But my objections to giving the reins to totalitarians of any kind is that they are even more incapable of achieving "it." In backward countries where there is no middle class the communist-totalitarians achieve despotism; in bourgeois countries they provoke fascism. They can't lead liberals because liberals, in the final analysis, aren't going the same way. In more personal terms, they can't lead this particular liberal because he would rather die than go that way. This liberal has learned his lesson from the death of 3,000,000 Russian peasants and the Moscow trials, which, however you take them, are a confession of the bankruptcy of the Leninist-Stalinist strategy and tactics.

It is indeed important to ask "when." But it is more important to ask "how."

(*Continued on page* 20)

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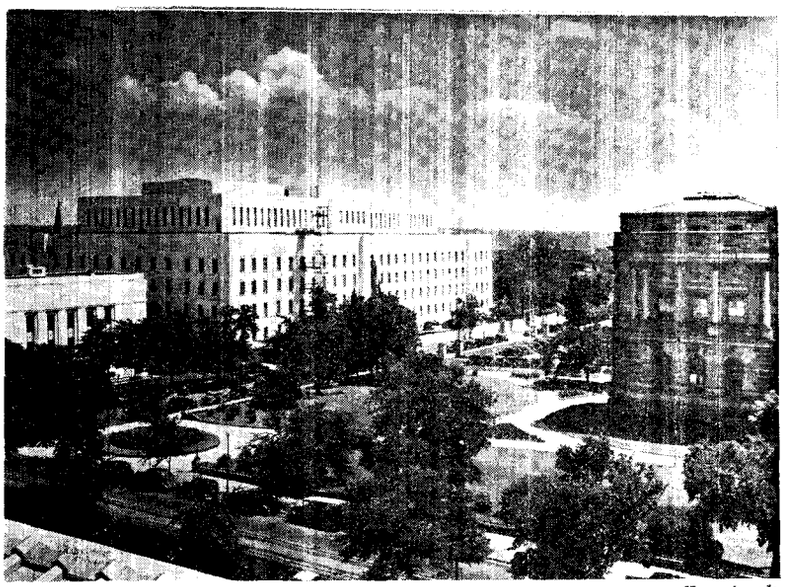

Horydczak

"The 1938 sawed-off skyscraper . . . is a statistical, mechanical wonder."

The Library of Congress

BY BLAIR BOLLES

ALL gleaming in white marble is the Congressional Library's new Annex, like the Folger Shakespeare Library crouched beside its lower floors and like the dazzling United States Supreme Court building around the corner. It stands five stories high, severe of line, modernistic in decoration, air-conditioned, squarish and squat, looking down across the street on the green copper dome of the familiar older library, gray stone and ornate, the delight of tourists as well as the haven of readers.

Sightseers by the millions have strolled through the old palace of books, designed in the best Columbian Exposition Renaissance style, and gaped at its three hundred pieces of sculpture, its gold and rose and green and blue mosaicked floors and ceilings, and its sweeping marble interior planes and columns and elaborate staircases. But the 1938 sawed-off skyscraper built to complement the palace is no sightseers' joy. It is a functional structure; it celebrates the Library's advance to its estate as the world's first book-collection, and it is interesting to the general public chiefly as the symbol of preëminence. It is, too, proof that times are swift, even for libraries. When the old building was opened forty-one years ago, Ainsworth Rand Spofford, the most diverting character among the Library's eight Librarians, predicted that it would satisfy the Library's needs "for a century and a half to come." Then the collection amounted to almost 1,000,000 volumes. Now, the latest census shows, the collection contains 5,395,044 printed books and pamphlets, 1,376,801 maps and views, 1,168,584 volumes and pieces of music, 450,851 prints, and too many manuscripts to count.

Many of these treasures will remain in the old palace, but many of them are being transferred to the new building so splendidly white, the key to which Librarian Herbert Putnam received last month from the architect. During the New Year, the Annex will be ready for the public. It is a statistical, mechanical wonder. It has 249 miles of shelving and twenty acres of floor space. Its sub-basement contains seven dark rooms (chiefly for the Library's photostatic work), each "supplied with thermostatically controlled hot, cold, and iced water for maintaining the proper temperature of developing baths." The fringe of the basement is given to the Library's Printing Office and Bindery; the fringe of the first floor to the Copyright Office; of the second floor to the Smithsonian, Semitic, and Document Divisions and to the reading room for bound newspapers; of the third floor to the Card Division; of the fourth floor to the air-conditioning machinery, and the whole of the fifth floor, which is set back from the walls of the lower building, to a card catalogue room, to two reading rooms, each with seats for several hundred readers, and to 172 special study rooms. In the center of the building, from the basement to the fifth floor, rise twelve tiers of stacks, with space for 10,000,000 books; the stacks are linked to the outer world by pneumatic tubes through which books speed to the reading rooms at twenty-five feet a second. The marvels of the Annex so charm Assistant Librarian Martin A. Roberts that, unperturbed by the failure of Mr. Spofford's forecast, he puts forth a prediction of his own: the Annex "has been so painstakingly designed that the added accommodations and the flexibility and increased celerity of operation will meet the demands for many years to come."

The Library whose home is sprawled over four blocks of Southeastern Washington was housed first at the Capitol in a corner of the office of the Senate Clerk, a room twenty-two by thirty-four feet. Its birth date is April 24, 1800, when President John Adams signed an Act providing, among other things, a $5,000 appropriation "for the purchase of . . . books . . . necessary for the use of Congress at . . . Washington." But the history of the modern Library begins much later in the century, in 1864, with President Lincoln's appointment of Spofford as Librarian. Spofford was a long-nosed, large-eyed man, an indiscriminate lover of books, who gave most of his thirty-four years in office to grumbling over Congress's niggardly treatment of the Library. Although Spofford was not a scholar, he was regarded with awe as a "living encyclopedia," who knew something of the contents of every book in the collection. "We can all remember him," one of his assistants wrote at his death in 1908, "at the ugly center desk in the corridor assigned to the public part of the Library, presiding over apparent chaos, and never without a list or catalogue in his hand, replying to questions while reading, and courteously bringing an armful of books when the needed help was not at hand."

Under Spofford the Library fattened; the greater the collection grew, the greater grew Spofford's pleasure and the greater grew his despair. In the Library's home, a chamber in the Capitol, Spofford lacked enough room for his books in 1881, and in 1882 he had to make way for the 25,000 volumes in the Joseph M. Toner collection. Books were set on the floor and balanced on rafters, piled on tables and stuck in drawers. Spofford day after day protested about the small space. At length Congress heeded his wails and in 1886 agreed to the construction of a separate Library building. In eleven years $6,350,000 was spent on "The Great Pantheon," to which, a newspaper observed at its opening in 1897, "there is nothing comparable as an artistic edifice in all this country." When the building was finished, Spofford, its father, was dismissed from his post. He was counted unequal to the business of running so vast an institution. He cheerfully assented to staying on as Assistant Librarian, and within two years President McKinley chose a specialist and a scholar, Herbert Putnam, for the exacting task of being Librarian for what was by then the leading library of the United States.

Dr. Putnam comes of the publishing line. He was thirty-eight when he assumed his duties in Washington. Now, at seventy-seven, he is daily at his office, arriving usually at seven o'clock in the morning. His story is the Library's latter-day story; he is an excellent administrator, an exact systematizer, the scientific builder of the world's foremost

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collection of books. Under an Act of Congress passed in June he could retire and become Librarian Emeritus at half his Librarian's pay of $10,000 a year; but he carries on until his successor as Librarian is named by the President.

Putnam has sent the Library into far fields. Under him it has become less a simple depository of books than a center of education and a register of the nation's learning and knowledge. The Library of 1938 approaches the field of the university in having five endowed chairs, whose occupants (chosen for their academic proficiency in American History, Geography, Fine Arts, Music, and Aeronautics) are principally advisers in the research of others. In the building Spofford won from Congress to hold his books Putnam has an auditorium for chamber music. Only China and Japan have more Chinese books than the Library that Putnam built, only Russia more Russian books; the Chinese collection possesses what is apparently the earliest extant edition of the Ming atlas of China, the Kuang yu-t'u, circa 1529, in a period when China feared the tribes to her West and not the little islanders to her East, who soon were to learn the rudiments of European ways from the Jesuit missionaries; and the Russian collection includes 1,632 beautifully bound volumes from the Romanov library in the Winter Palace. The Congressional Library expanded so swiftly after 1899 that in 1928 the bill was introduced in the House providing for the purchase of the ground on which to construct an annex. In 1935 the appropriations for the building and the tunnel connecting it with the main library had come to $8,226,457.75. The final cost is more than $9,100,000.

The Library is still the Library of Congress, and the most welcome patron of this luxurious home for books is the legislator who appropriates the money that runs the place. Congress instructs the Treasury each year to provide the Library with almost $3,000,000, peanuts in some governmental agencies but enough to keep going Putnam Hall, with its endowments, under the Library of Congress Trust Fund, amounting to almost $2,000,000. The Library authorities smile on unattached citizens, but when Senator Jerziz wants a certain book, the unattached citizen must waive his claim to it; the Senator gets it first. That is only politic. As the years go by, Dr. Putnam reports, not only does the Congressional literary hunger increase but the fare becomes more solid and more costly; nothing in recent times has so stirred the Congressman's appetite for solid, expensive printed information as the fight over the Supreme Court bill in 1937. In the course of that battle five hundred and thirty-one Representatives and Senators telephoned to the Library 18,056 requests for books, and a large percentage of the books concerned jurisprudence. The Law Library division, which contains almost 400,000 volumes, took care of most of these juridical calls. The Law Library's development into a great national repository of legal material has long been the dream of John T. Vance, Jr., its chief, and he feels that the dream "is already beginning to show signs of early realization, not alone in the number of volumes . . . but also in the interest that has been aroused in the Congress and among the members of the bar and law libraries throughout the United States." The bent toward serious reading in Washington does not halt with the People's Choices at the Capitol. Apparently all have taken to study. The demands on the Library have so increased that the 1,219,518 volumes issued in the reading room in 1937 were 33,393 more than in 1936, or more than twice as many as were issued in 1927 and almost four times as many as were issued in 1907. The reason for this swift upward trend, in Dr. Putnam's opinion, is "the widening recognition of the importance of research in government." Books are a measure of government's broadening terrain in the United States. Dr. Putnam remarked a year ago: "Our expanded post-war governmental structure has called into being bureaus whose functions have depended very largely upon investigations into the literature of the social and political and even the historical sciences. Thus the number of governmental agencies which borrow material from us for their official use has more than doubled in the three years since 1934."

Still, the furrowed brow of the civil servant deep in solemn research could hardly be called the symbol of the Library. The Library *is* attentive to the wants of the private citizen, the independent scholar, the free author, and the casual, unofficial reader. Neither Congress nor an alphabet agency was on the mind of Valta Parma when he set Gustav Davidson, the author of "Songs of Adoration," to work in his Rare Book Room collating and uncovering material in the juvenile literary field, from the Rollo books and the Elsie books to "Ferdinand." The Library's Music Division scarcely gave the Senators a thought when it accepted from André Kostelanetz a sealed container holding two modern records which have been cached in the Library for our posterity: George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" and Ferde Grofé's "Cloudburst," from the "Grand Canyon Suite."

Literature and scholarship, not government, are the Library's loves, and the Library's study rooms, monastic cells of a sort, each with four walls, a desk, a chair, and a door which the tenant can lock, are its sanctuaries. In these rooms, whose number the Annex increases, 1,150 persons pursued their investigations during 1937. They came from twenty-one foreign countries as well as from the United States. They required more than 250,000 books of the Library, and the fruits of their inquiry are partially apparent in a list of thirty-seven books recently published by the study room researchists. Among these works are two biographies of Henry Clay, a life of Claude Kitchin and a bibliography of Edmund Spenser, a biography of Boies Penrose and an anthology of Seventeenth Century British verse, "Supervision and Control of Virginia State Banks" and "Dynamic Causes of Juvenile Crime," "Studies in the Theory of Economic Expansion" and "Marriage in the Lutheran Church."

The study rooms are prizes for those who convince the Library authorities that their projected undertakings will be of general value. For the lucky scholars assigned to the rooms, and, indeed, for all who use the Library, a vast amount of material is available, so vast, in fact, that guidance in its use is necessary if its full worth is to be realized. The Chairs make the guidance possible. Says Dr. Putnam:

"Here are these great collections. . . . There is the great inquiring public—the student, the investigator, the groups organized for research, the organization requiring information as the basis of some particular operation . . ., the ordinary inquirer seeking more exact knowledge or aspiring to some further culture. The response is somewhere in this mass of material; but the mass is huge, it doesn't

"Sightseers by the millions have strolled through the old palace of books" . . .

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speak for itself, and the apparatus which attempts to speak for it has a language of its own. The need is for some one who knows both the collections and the language of the apparatus, and knows also the problem and the language of the inquirer — investigator or connoisseur — and can serve as interpreter."

The huge mass includes the first printed edition of Plato and the most recent works on aeronautics, papal bulls of the first millennium and talking books of 1938. Many of the items are kept in a steel fortress in the old Library building, Mr. Parma's rare book room, behind whose bronze door lies the incunabula collection which the Library obtained from Dr. Otto H. Vollbehr. Dr. Vollbehr sold to the United States for $1,500,000 the 3,000 ancient tomes he began to gather as an antidote for a nervousness he acquired in a train wreck. The Gutenberg Bible, which cost the doctor altogether $325,000 only one hundred and fifty years after another Gutenberg sold for $400, is the most publicized volume in this collection. But, to the inhabitant of the United States, almost equally interesting are three works on early voyages to America: Sebastian Brandt's "Ship of Fools," 1497; Baptista Mantuanus's "Three Golden Books of Patience," 1499, and Aeneas Sylvius's "History of Persons, Places and Things." Columbus took Sylvius's book with him on his fourth voyage across the Atlantic and made notes on the margins.

Pinchot

Joseph Auslander: "now investigating a trunkful of unidentified Whitmaniana" . . .

Such matters belong truly in scholarship's realm. The Division of Aeronautics acts from another point of view. Events in the airplane world, says Dr. Albert Francis Zahm, chief of the division and occupant of the Chair of Aeronautics, "must have the notice of statesmen, who in turn require ample literature ready at hand, reasonably verified and duly appraised." In its reaching for this ample literature, the Division collects catalogues, bibliographies, book reviews, house organs, reports intended for limited distribution, and certain government documents as well as the more readily available magazines and books. Dr. Zahm's assistants stay busy preparing reference lists for government bureaus and other groups on aeronautic literature. Some of these lists have treated such subjects as air strategy and tactics; Congressional hearings on aeronautics; articles by and about Alfred W. Lawson; women in aeronautics; aviation insurance, atmospheric gusts, Hugo Mattullath's flying boat, and transportation of heavy freight by air.

Far removed from this machine-age pursuit of Dr. Zahm's is the Division of Manuscript's Project E—the cataloguing of alchemical manuscripts. The Library is rich in manuscripts, and Joseph Auslander, the Library's consultant in poetry, is now investigating a trunkful of unidentified Whitmaniana in the Library's collections. In five sealed boxes are the Lincoln papers, not to be seen until 1947. The Division recently came into the general correspondence, 7,000 letters, of Alexander Stephens, vice president of the Confederate States, and Professor Jacob Hammer turned over to the Library rotographs of fourteen different manuscripts of the Historia Regni Britanniae.

The Map Division is a popular section of the Library and of tremendous value in assisting nations at deciding certain international problems. The Library of Congress today has maps by Ortelius and Mercator. Among its other possessions are Samuel de Champlain's manuscript map of 1608 showing parts of New England and Canada after the first Champlain explorations along the St. Lawrence region, and George Washington's own drawing of his farm. In 1937 the Division supplied readers with 21,500 maps and atlases. The delegations of Ecuador and Peru in Washington working toward the settlement of the boundary dispute between those two countries have study rooms at the Library, where they work over maps supplied by the Division of Maps. The Division aided in the settlement of the Great Lakes water level case, the Delaware-New Jersey boundary dispute, and in the arbitration proceedings between the United States and the Netherlands over Palmas Island, near the Philippines.

At the same institution which helps define the borders of sovereign nations, the Library of Congress, thousands of out-of-towners can read their home newspapers. Ancestor-worshipers are supplied with a genealogical reading room which served 28,452 readers in 1937. The Division of Bibliography, in its 2,875 memoranda prepared in 1937, answered questions on such topics as the art of knife-throwing, the history of wheeled vehicles, and what dishes Jefferson might have preferred for a Jefferson Day banquet. When the Royal Hungarian Consulate General in New York sought a list of all books and pamphlets on President Roosevelt's program and achievements, the Bibliographical Division supplied not alone a group of lists already prepared but a special seven-page supplementary memorandum. Eighty-three American folk songs obtained from a 75-year-old blind woman in the Arkansas mountains are part of the Music Division's Archive of American Folk Song, developed through John A. Lomax and his son, Alan Lomax. The learning of the world is the Library's scope.

Blair Bolles is on the editorial staff of the Washington Star.

Light Verse Revalued

THE OXFORD BOOK OF LIGHT VERSE. Chosen by W. H. Auden. New York: Oxford University Press. 1938. $3.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

ONE'S expectation of mere *vers de société* will be disappointed, and properly so, in this remarkable collection of light verse by one of the significant modern poets of England. He considers "light verse" to be that which is written when the poet is pretty much at ease in his own time, and that there may be serious light verse as well as witty. In any case, in light verse, the poet's "language will be straightforward and close to ordinary speech," just as, when the poet feels that "his interests and perceptions are not readily acceptable to society, or his audience is a highly specialized one" his language will depart from the language of that society and he will not be writing light verse. Light verse has its limitations, since the kind of society it reflects may, as in the eighteenth century, have considerable intellectual limitations. In conclusion, Mr. Auden hopes for a future society wherein it will be possible for the poet "without sacrificing any of his subtleties of sensibility or his integrity, to write poetry which is simple, clear, and gay."

To one American reader it would seem that even now there are a few such poets about, though not many. However, quite aside from thesis, Mr. Auden has compiled a book of poetry written to be sung, written to be read, poetry with the lustiness of Chaucer, Dunbar, and Burns, poetry with the immortal nonsensicality of Lewis Carroll and Lear, folk ballads old and modern, the pure poetry of Blake, and that of Byron, whom the compiler regards as "the first writer of Light Verse in the modern sense." Many ballads are included, many songs both heartily fleshly or delicate. I am rather surprised that Mr. Auden does not see fit to include the work of Mr. T. S. Eliot in certain earlier moods, certainly a light verse poet then, in the sense stated; or of Wallace Stevens.

Mr. Auden's liking for American folksong, "Casey Jones," "Frankie and Johnnie," certain Negro spirituals, leads him naturally to include Vachel Lindsay's significantly American "Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan." All poems in "The Oxford Book of English Verse" (save one) have been barred, to obviate overlapping. There is enough fresh, unexpected material to whet the tooth of the mind, and the great mingle in democratic fashion with the greatly anonymous. The limerick is not disdained, and even established poets of the first rank are surprised in their lighter moments.

All the way from Mother Goose to the Foggy, Foggy Dew, with giants such as Dryden in between. And the dons of Oxford dancing on the green.

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Two American Musicians

MUSIC IS MY FAITH, An Autobiography. By David Mannes. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1938. $3.

Reviewed by ROBERT A. SIMON

MANY a musical autobiography is the history of a triumphant Cause—the Cause being the musician who has composed the autobiography. This familiar and not especially enchanting note is absent from David Mannes's "Music Is My Faith." It is an unassuming, charming, and inspiriting account of a man who has devoted his life to music, and whose devotion has been rewarded by the experience of finding himself. You may have read other autobiographies in which musicians didn't wait to find themselves but went right out and invented themselves. But Mr. Mannes has no fictitious overtones.

I don't know Mr. Mannes except by sight, and yet I'm certain that the tall, slender, somewhat ascetic-looking gentleman I see in concert halls occasionally is the same person who appears in "Music Is My Faith." For this book has an unpretentious sincerity that marks it as the real McCoy. And the real Mannes.

The achievements of Mr. Mannes as a violinist, a conductor, and an educator need not be retailed here, for they are part of our musical history—and a rather more important part than the sensational doings of more widely paragraphed luminaries. The chronicle of his life, which he tells without literary flourishes, is a simple record of progress, beginning in New York's tenderloin district, passing through the orchestra pits of theaters, study in Europe, the activities of a symphony orchestra musician, soloist, chamber music player, teacher, and founder of music schools.

You may get many angles on Mr. Mannes from his book. One that I found particularly interesting was the professionalism of the man. "Professionalism" will be, for some, "a horrid word." To me it means knowing one's business, knowing that one knows it and knowing that one will never know it so well that there won't be more to learn. It is this professionalism in Mr. Mannes that makes musical snobbery, doctrinaire criticism, and romantic generalizations impossible for him. It may be that only the thorough professional can become the genuine amateur, using "amateur" in its true sense.

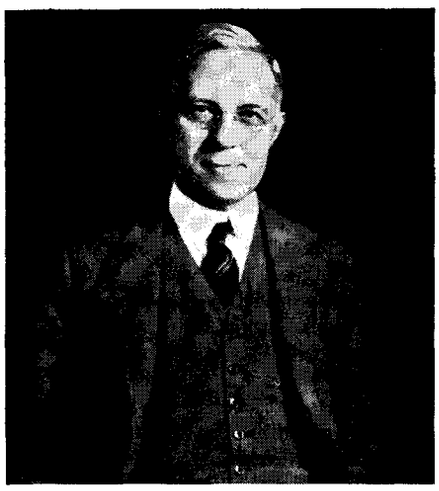
Not so incidentally, "Music Is My Faith" is something that may be read with pleasure by those who, as Leopold Godowsky once said, "don't know a flat from an apartment." It has interest even for people who think that music is a fine thing in its place so long as they don't have to be in the same place. I suppose that I ought to point out a few trivial factual slip-ups, but they don't matter.

MUSIC IN MY TIME. By Daniel Gregory Mason. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1938. $5.

Reviewed by IRVING KOLODIN

AS a musician who is also a man of letters, Daniel Gregory Mason, American composer and professor of music at Columbia University, is singularly well equipped to recall, in these four hundred pages, the panorama of musical activity in this country during the sixty-five years of his life. Descendant of a New England family that included among its male members such historically important musicians as Lowell and William Mason, allied by family ties to the important manufacturing firm of Mason and Hamlin, the author was destined almost from the day of his birth in Brookline to some form of musical activity.

Thus what we have in this volume is not a recitation of an overpowering urge



Kaiden Studios
Daniel Gregory Mason

manifest against the restraint and opposition of commercially minded parents (as almost any other American musician of his and several later generations could write) but of a desire fostered and indulged. Tradition decreed an education that included Harvard, which permits some personalized vignettes of Santayana, Josiah Royce, and William James. When Dr. Mason left college to live in New York, he was immediately inducted into the choicest musical circle of the city, which gathered in the home of his uncle William, where he met MacDowell, Arthur Whiting, Dohnanyi, and particularly Ossip Gabrilowitsch.

All of this is set down with verve and a good deal of charming literary detail, but there is an undertone which is never, to revert to musical terms, quite properly orchestrated. It is quite plain from Dr. Mason's discussion that he considers his family to have been a musical aristocracy in a land of barrenness—a view that is not unreasonable, but one that led him to regard composition as his calling in life, rather than another form of musical activity. This, and not his writing, lecturing, or teaching, is Dr. Mason's conviction of his chosen field.

This is relevant to the present book only because there are recurrent discussions of his music in the volume, and especially because Dr. Mason has demonstrated some grievous ill-temper in his attitude towards the musical press. Certainly it is extravagant to characterize one of the finest scholars America has produced as "the notorious Philip Hale" or to quote approvingly a friend's comment on some writing of Mason's: "this sort of thing . . . is a necessity and will help bury the Hales and Hunekers." As a music reviewer, I am only too conscious of the sad inadequacy of many practitioners of the trade, but is Dr. Mason the one to deal objectively with the subject?

Among the contemporaries, young and old, who have impressed themselves on Dr. Mason's recollection are not only the musicians previously mentioned, and such others as the French composer Vincent D'Indy (with whom he spent several months), Bruno Walter, John Powell, and Vaughan Williams, but also such literary men as William Vaughn Moody and Edwin Arlington Robinson. There are many good pictures and an excellent index.

Writer's Diary

IT'S NOT MY PROBLEM. By Kenneth Horan. New York: Doubleday, Doran. 1938. $2.

Reviewed by GLADYS GRAHAM

IT was an earlier generation that Kenneth Horan peopled for us in "Remember the Day." Her new book snaps at our own heels. Allen Tate, Hugh Walpole, Ford Madox Ford, and unnamed but guessable other contemporaries are neatly impaled for satiric dissection. But in both books the best character sketching, the most satisfying exposure of foible and frailty, are to be found in the dossiers of the less famed. The Horan family, the sisters and the cousins and the aunts, the suburban neighbors, the literary and medical friends who come and go in the hospitable if frenzied household—these make up the irresistible world of this Mrs. Pepysish diary.

The publishers call "It's Not My Problem" a novel, and perhaps the slight divorce-involved story of two of the characters justifies such a designation, but it will be the spirited comments on daily life, the all-too-true chronicling of family frictions, which will draw readers to the book. However salutary it may be to see ourselves as others see us, it is much more amusing to see others as we see them, when recorded with the wit and grace of Kenneth Horan.

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Advertising under Fire

IT'S AN ART. By Helen Woodward. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1938. $2.75.

Reviewed by PAUL H. NYSTROM

THIS book of 405 pages, with acknowledgments to "Charles C. Baldwin, Consumers' Union, Dr. Charles A. Marlies, Corinne Marsh, Mrs. John Shepard of the New York State Liquor Control Board, Dr. Renée von Eulenberg-Wiener; and also the advertising men and women who prefer to remain anonymous," touches not only upon almost every phase of advertising but also with ex-cathedra authority on what's what in foods, clothing, cosmetics, medicine, tobacco, liquor, automobiles, children, radio, and chain stores. It is written, according to the admission of the writer in the "hard, economical," wisecracking style of the magazine *Time*.

What is its purpose? Mrs. Woodward does not say, and the reading of the book does not disclose. No subject is dealt with comprehensively. There is little or no practical application indicated. It certainly isn't a textbook that can be used profitably by any one who hopes to go into advertising as a vocation. Though highly imaginative in many places, it isn't fiction. Nor is it a very entertaining book. Business in general, and advertising in particular, comes in for an extraordinary amount of harsh criticism. But it requires something of a special predilection for slumming and a strong constitution to keep up interest in four hundred pages of material obviously compiled to show advertising at its worst. Even a smartly curved lip of cynicism can't relieve this monotony.

A generation ago this book would have been classified as muckraking. Today it may perhaps be rated as belonging to the guinea pig school of literature. Many of the criticisms of advertising and of the products advertised have appeared elsewhere, although not always, perhaps, with the caustic touch accorded here.

Of course business under our present economic system is carried on for profit. I do not recall anyone claiming otherwise. Certainly the purposes of advertising are selfishly to sell goods, but in order to sell goods an appeal must likewise be made to the selfishness of the customer. Why harp on the human selfishness which every child as well as every grown up recognizes, unless a better, more ideal, and at the same time a more practical system can be proposed and applied?

The author stresses intuition rather than training as a basic need for those who write advertising copy. Facts and information are said to play but little part in this business. There are plenty of examples cited in proof of this contention. But are they typical? One wonders whether this book may not likewise be taken as an illustration of intuition running riot. Should some exception be made in this case for the publisher's announcements urging people to buy this book? Are the statements appearing on the book's attractive jacket also to be rated as of the same low standard as advertising in general, according to the author's views?

In view of these circumstances it may seem somewhat prosaic and perchance superfluous to point out aberrations from what might otherwise be thought of as factual content in the book. Only a few of the many debatable and questionable points drawn from its first hundred pages will be mentioned here.

"Advertising is based on the theory of obsolescence in merchandise in modern industry." This statement is obviously too broad. There are physical limits to an appeal to obsolescence which have apparently been completely overlooked.

"The sale [of sewing machines] to private users has dropped steadily." The Census of Manufacturers for 1935 shows an increase in machines for domestic use from 128,008 in 1933 to 284,124 in 1935. This doesn't look like a steady drop.

"The first advertising of any size in America was that of patent medicines." This statement completely overlooks the development of retail advertising. Mrs. Woodward would have done well to review the history of advertising before writing this statement.

The gag about the advertiser who advertised a set of furniture for a dollar and who actually sent the farmer a set of doll's furniture has been making the rounds of the popular joke books for at least fifty years or more. Did it ever happen?

"Department stores and mail order houses are so close to the customer that they have to have a higher standard of honesty than the national advertiser." This is very debatable. The Better Business Bureaus are kept fairly active in keeping the fringes of foolish and mischievous retail advertisers in line.

"Fewer people can afford to eat fruit today than could do so twenty-five years ago." Despite the declines in the consumption of apples noted by Mrs. Woodward, many other fruits have come into use and the total poundage, not dollars' worth, of fresh fruits, canned fruits, frozen fruits, and fruits in other forms consumed today is higher than ever before.

"People on relief can hardly buy bread, much less canned fruit, so they are out of our picture." This is ridiculous. Canned peaches, for example, are ordinarily one of the lowest priced fruits and are commonly included in suggested budgets for families on relief. Any inquiry among retail stores serving lower income families would have convinced the author that there is a very considerable market for canned fruit of the cheaper kinds among people of low incomes and even among people on relief.

"There are 20,500,000 families in the United States" is a careless error. The Census of 1930 enumerated 29,904,663 families.

"*Life* alone took hundreds of thousands of readers from *Collier's, Saturday Evening Post, Liberty*, etc." is subject to some discount for lack of accuracy. The circulation figures reported by these magazines during the years in which *Life* has been published are as follows:

	Collier's	*Sat. Eve. Post*	*Liberty*
1936	2,486,050	2,889,030	2,436,106
1937	2,572,729	2,995,745	2,398,901
1938	2,624,632	3,095,355	2,605,445

And so on.

There is likewise something queer about the implications of the book. Consider these two samples:

"From the inside the advertising man looks out in continual amazement on the believing public. . . . Don't they know we are trying to sell them something?" The implication intended is evidently critical. The statement, if ever made by any advertising man, is childish. Probably both advertisers and buyers of advertised goods realize that it is the purpose of advertising to try to sell something.

The advertising writers "were just a lot of people with astute and ingenious minds putting something over on the public and having an exciting and pretty good time doing it" is a fairly typical statement illustrating the attitude of the book regarding the function of advertising and the work of advertising people past and present.

There is a bright remark on page 30 about the movement for truth in advertising and the movement against pirating each other's accounts among advertising agencies being merely copy-book maxims quoted in speeches at banquets. How is one to interpret the author's own admission of having shifted from one agency to another and taking the accounts upon which she was working with her at least three times? Wisecracks about the efforts being made to raise the standards of advertising may seem entertaining to those who know nothing about it, but somewhat unfair to those who have actually helped to build up higher standards. Responsible people who have lived with advertising and advertisers during the past generation well know that the "old glorious freedom to lie as much as we liked" has always been a practice followed by the chiseling tenth rather than by the rank and file.

Why was this book written? What is its purpose? Can it be that this reiteration of the evils of business, some actual

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and others imagined, is intended in some way to serve as a preparation for some new economic ideology? There are critical references in the book to "concentration of control," to "social turnover," and to sympathy for the "socially minded citizens of California who supported Upton Sinclair in his campaign for Governor."

Present-day business in general, and advertising in particular, are far from perfect. Constructive criticism is always needed. There is always room for improvement. Perhaps something of value of this sort can be read into this work. But to those of us who have enjoyed Mrs. Woodward's previous books this one is disappointing.

Paul H. Nystrom is Professor of Marketing at the School of Business, Columbia University.

French Panorama

RESIDENTIAL QUARTER. By Louis Aragon. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by GILBERT CHASE

THE former leader of the Dada and Surrealist movements in France, having hitched his wagon to the hammer and sickle of communism, has lately turned his attention to large-scale social fiction, planning a vast panorama of contemporary French life, of which the first volume, "The Bells of Basel," appeared in 1936. This is the second volume of the projected series, which bears the general title, "The Real World," and it deals with the period just before the World War. Part I has its setting in a small town in the south of France, Parts II and III in Paris. It is one of those far-flung canvases on which we see many lives intertwining, private dramas being played against the background of public events. The book is very uneven in quality. Aragon has much talent: his power of description is remarkable, his virtuosity brilliant, his style nervous and swift. He keeps the complicated strands of his oversize novel well in hand; sweeps the reader along, achieves excitement, terror, and emotional stress. But his novel is marred by gratuitous obscenity and a ribald vulgarity that detracts from its serious purpose as a social commentary. In the Parisian section of the book, the two provincial brothers, Edmond and Armand, the former a medical student with high ambitions, the latter still groping for a way of life, are involved in melodramatic complications that eventually lead to blackmail and murder. In Edmond's thoughtless affair with an elderly professor's wife and its inexorable aftermath of sordid tragedy, the author is dealing with realities. But he cannot stay on this ground very long; he cannot refrain from undressing humanity in public. The result is not only unedifying, it is often grotesque.

The Theater in the Seventies

ANNALS OF THE NEW YORK STAGE. By George C. D. Odell, Vols. VIII, IX, and X. New York: Columbia University Press. 1938. $8.75 *each.*

Reviewed by JOHN ANDERSON

PROFESSOR ODELL is doubtless tired of hearing his great work referred to as "monumental" but plainly it comes within the strict meaning as both substantial and important. The fact that it is also faintly incredible as a research achievement lends it an extra quality of astonishment which is increased as each new volume issues from the press. Beyond that it has the ever saving grace of being not only a scholar's history of the New York stage, but the record of a passionate playgoer undaunted by the calendar. These qualities, uniquely combined, guarantee the work an obvious permanency and an immediate fascination.

Volume X brings the annals up to what Professor Odell calls "the mellow seventies," and it does somehow suggest the sauntering charm of a town that was expanding in its post-war and post-panic affluence and evolving a gently cosmopolitan air that was to be lost in its later stony vastness.

In the diminished modern theater it is difficult to imagine how completely the life of the town was reflected in its entertainments. We may be inclined to smile tolerantly on what, at first glance, might seem the naiveté of the public of the seventies, but sophistication, alas! remains firmly a matter of the date line. Tomorrow will inevitably smile as indulgently at our own dazzling smartness, and wonder how a ventriloquist could become a national idol, and the biggest musical show on Broadway, A. D. 1938, contain a disappearing act and a big bicycle number.

Historical parallels have a way of driving people either to disillusion or to J. B. Priestley and his time plays. These annals are full of details likely to make the contemporary jump and take a quizzical look at the date. A new Hamlet was being acclaimed by the critics because he had freed the part, at last, from its gathered effeminacy; a company of French players was, even then, trying to establish a foothold in the town (what despairing persistence!); a production of "Julius Caesar" was one of the glories of the time, and the situation was such that Professor Odell could write "the theater now struggled for its life."

P.D.Q. was new and rather daring slang in those days; gasping audiences assembled in Brooklyn to hear music played over the telephone from Philadelphia, a newcomer named John Drew was Booth's Guildenstern, while Maurice Barrymore, in a blond wig that was the wonder of the moment, was playing "Our Boys." "Pinafore" was not a production but a plague. Six companies in joyously pirated versions were playing in town, and in the surfeit of such a fad, burlesques were cropping up under such dubious titles as "H.B.S. Venus," and "T.P.S. Canal Boat Pinafore." It was undoubtedly a whizz.

The more sedate theater was in the throes of a controversy over the merits of Mary Anderson and Mme. Modjeska, and Modjeska's "Camille" as compared to Matilda Heron's (Gilbert Miller's grandmother) was a point of issue. Charles and Rose Coghlan were playing in "School for Scandal," and poor Fechter in his age had returned, as Professor Odell movingly puts the tragedy which overtakes all stars, "to a public that had grown used to doing without him." Ada Rehan, at his period, was playing an obscure part in a Bowery theater before her great acclaim, and Augustin Daly was becoming the arbiter of the polite drama. At the turn of the decade Gilmore's became Madison Square Garden. It retains the name if not the square.

Towards the end of a volume of 775 pages, with an index of 105 more, Professor Odell jovially remarks: "I omit several walking matches of April in Queens County, and frequent strawberry festivals in June."

That would seem, at a guess, to be about the extent of the omissions. I must say that many of the amateur entertainments in outlying sections of the town seem unworthy of such careful excavation, and suggest an archeological digging for the mere fun of exhumation. Now and then they do make an irrelevant clutter to the main business, even when they are amusing in themselves. But such tenacious research proves its value again and again. Without it we might never have known that the horse in "Mazeppa" was named James Melville.

As Professor Odell approaches the present, the periods covered by the separate volumes become shorter, since the material grows more voluminous. Vol. X covers the years from 1875 to 1879, Vol. IX from 1870 to 1875, Vol. VIII from 1865 to 1870. Before that date they range around nine years, except the first, covering the colonial years.

The last half of the decade (Vol. IX) was to see the introduction by Wallack of the American dramatist, Bronson Howard, who was to dominate the period. An era was passing, and the American theater was trying to stand shakily on its own feet, instead of Europe's. Boucicault came back, and brought with him "The Shaughraun," Adelaide Neilson played Juliet, E. A. Sothern appeared in "Our American Cousin," and the panic put the whole theater through the rigors of imminent collapse. New ideas were drift-

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ing in from Europe and the theater was facing the period of its greatest expansion. Professor Odell is to get to that later, for it is to be continued in his next, a breathless chronicle for which he is to be thanked. It is a challenging job, and it is being done with great scholarship, energy, imagination, and love.

John Anderson is dramatic critic of the Journal American. *His book, "The American Theater," recently appeared.*

Dickens: a Self-Portrait

(*Continued from page* 4)

manuscripts with untiring comments: he wastes his genius over mere minutiae of editing. He is in Boulogne and Paris during the Crimean War. He sees nothing but an amusing spectacle; the "war news" to him turns comic in the reading.

> Everything that happens here, [he writes (Boulogne Oct. 13, 1854)] we suppose to be an announcement of the taking of Sebastopol. . . . Everybody says, every day, that Sebastopol is in flames. Sometimes the commander-in-chief has blown himself up with seventy-five thousand men. Sometimes he has "cut" his way through Lord Raglan and has fallen back on the advancing body of Russians, one hundred and forty-two thousand strong whom he is going to "bring up" (I don't know how, or where from, or when, or why) for the destruction of the allies.

Seen in this light, Waterloo or Gettysburg would have been uproariously funny.

Much more real is the comment of a letter on the War written (Jan. 3, 1855) after his return to England.

> The absorption of the English mind on war is to me, a melancholy thing. Every other subject of popular solicitude and sympathy goes down before it. I fear I clearly see that for years to come domestic reforms are shaken to the root; every miserable red-tapist flourishes war over the head of every protester against his humbug; and everything connected with it is pushed to such an unreasonable extent that, however kind and necessary it may be in itself, it becomes ridiculous. For all this . . . it is an indubitable fact that Russia must be stopped and that the peace of the world renders the war imperative on us.

This is the real Dickens, an anti-militarist but unfortunately one who takes for granted that of course his own life and property will be properly looked after by the police, and that the government will not allow war to get nearer to him than the morning paper: failing this, he will write to the press.

In the opening portion of Volume III we have the interest of the letters, such as there are, which deal with Charles Dickens's separation from his wife, still imperfectly explained by history and still obscured by that conspiracy of silence with which his friends saw fit to surround it. Dickens, in all that he wrote about it, insists on referring to it as a separation by mutual desire. The reality, no doubt, was that Dickens put his wife away from him. Her consent, as far as she had any choice, was only formal. But there is something verging on the contemptible in what Dickens wrote of it. "My elder children all understand it [our separation] perfectly, and accept it as inevitable." In the same letter (the famous and oft-quoted letter of May 25, 1858 to Arthur Smith, his lecture manager, with full permission to show it) Dickens declares himself too "manly" to give the *true* reason for the estrangement but says,

> In the manly consideration which I owe to my wife I will merely remark of her that the peculiarity of her character has thrown all the children on some one else. I do not know—I cannot by any stretch of fancy imagine—what would have become of them but for this aunt [his sister-in-law Georgina Hogarth who lived with him then and till his death] who has grown up with them and to whom they are devoted.

In other words Dickens "merely remarks" that his wife was such a woman that if her own children were placed in her care, they'd have presumably all gone to hell—just what kind of hell not stated, but so bad that even Dickens couldn't imagine it. It is a sorry record, worth reflection.

Much more "manly" is the tone of the letter of young Charles, the son, then newly come of age:—

> My dear Father, what you told me this morning so completely took me by surprise that I am afraid I did not completely make myself understood to you and I think I can write you better what I mean than say it to you. Don't suppose that in making my choice I was actuated by any feeling of preference for my mother to you. . . . In doing as I have done, I hope I am doing my duty and that you will understand me.

What is it that took the son by surprise —the fact that his mother was to be separated or that he was given his choice of living with her if he wished to?

Dickens in a letter of the same day to John Leach tries to imply that this latter alternative was the surprise. If so, we have to understand that young Charles "understood the situation perfectly and accepted the inevitable," but had of course supposed that Mrs. Dickens would be sent off alone, without any of the children. Is it not more reasonable to suppose that young Charles, in spite of all the family difficulty, could not believe that his father would put his wife away from him? It was a mean business. Dickens, as a matter of fact, never saw his wife again and the allowance he made her, compared with his enormous income of the period, was not generous.

There follows the epistolary record of the "public readings" that had already begun and that followed after the separation, a success even greater, though necessarily more ephemeral, than that of Dickens's work in print. We read of how at Clifton, "the people were perfectly taken off their legs by the 'Chimes'"; at Dublin "the crying [over Paul Dombey's death] was universal"; at Belfast, "I have never seen men go in to cry so undisguisedly as they did at that reading yesterday afternoon." At Harrowgate one gentleman "after crying a good deal without hiding it, covered his face with both hands and laid it down on the back of the seat before him, and really shook with emotion." "At the end of 'Dombey'" (and these were Scots at Glasgow), "in the cold light of day . . . they all got up and thundered and waved their hats."

Such episodes with scenes of mass hysteria, with women carried out in fainting fits and strong men frozen into horror, followed Dickens in these and the other lecture tours which lasted till the close of his career.

Lecturing took him a second time to America, in a tour from November, 1867 to April, 1868. In spite of his triumphant platform success the record is a sad one. Dickens had long since forgiven the Americans for being Americans and the Americans had long since forgiven Dickens, because he was Dickens. But he was too old, too tired, too self-centered, too eager (already rich) for more money, to care about their country. The few gleams of real interest which he showed were for Boston, the early city of his adoption. "It is the established joke," he writes, "that Boston is my native place." Here he dined with Longfellow, Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Agassiz, and in some small measure rekindled earlier fires. He speaks of Cambridge where (letter to Georgina Hogarth Jan. 4, 1868) "a delightful domestic life . . . is seen in an admirable aspect. All New England is primitive and puritanical. All about it and around it is a puddle of mixed human mud, with no such quality in it."

The letters of the period between Dickens's return from America in May, 1868 and his death in June, 1870 bear witness to the unhappy strain of continued lecturing, of needless overwork, by which his life was shortened. One would gladly discover here some new clue to the unsolved "Mystery of Edwin Drood." But Dickens in his intimate correspondence preserved his secrecy. "There is a curious interest," he writes to his American friend James T. Fields, the publisher, "steadily working up to No. 5, which requires a great deal of art and self denial . . . at No. 5 and No. 6 the story will turn upon an interest suspended till the end." Those who believe, with the writer of this review, that "at the end" Edwin Drood appears alive and active in pursuit of Jasper, will draw what consolation they can from this cryptic sentence.

The letters end with a communication June 8, 1870 saying to a correspondent, who complained of something or other as irreverent, "I have always striven in my writings to express veneration for the life and lessons of Our Savior." This is characteristic of Dickens. The silliest of criticisms stung him to defend himself. He lived, and died, explaining himself.

Stephen Leacock is the author of "Charles Dickens: His Life and Work."

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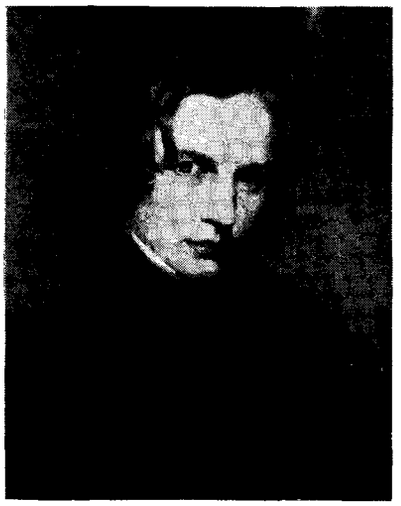

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The Byzantine World

IMPERIAL BYZANTIUM. The Thousand Years of the Eastern Roman Empire. By Bertha Diener. Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul. Boston: Little, Brown & Company. 1938. $3.50.

Reviewed by ELMER DAVIS

"BYZANTINE" was once a term of reproach, owing to various reasons listed by Miss Diener and one that she omits—the bad impression created in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Western Europe by the numerous emissaries of a dying empire, who came looking for help against the Turks. But for centuries the Eastern Roman Empire had been the bulwark of Europe against barbarism, a fortress behind whose protection the Western nations were able gradually to grow out of savagery. When they grew strong enough they pulled the bulwark down; but for the overthrow of the eastern Empire by the Venetians and the Franks of the Fourth Crusade, the eventual destruction by the Turks might never have been possible. (It seems to be a habit of Europe to pull down its bulwarks against barbarism.) Such a state merits, and of late years has been getting, more study and more appreciation; for a long time it was the greatest power in the world, for a longer time Constantinople was the greatest, richest, and most sophisticated of cities. Miss (or Mrs.) Diener has made a gallant effort to analyze that peculiar state, spiritually and socially; her style is sometimes pretty tough going and sometimes her thought does not seem to be quite clear, but it is a fascinating book for those who have the industry to wrestle with some unfamiliar ideas.

The Roman Emperor in Constantinople was also, in effect, the Pope of the Eastern Church; the theme of Byzantine life was "the world-embracing mysteries of God and Man," the Empire was in effect "the kingdom of the Holy Grail." In many respects it would seem far from holy to us; but for a thousand years theology was the dominant interest, with war, fornication, and horse-racing competing for second place. Of the hundred and seven Emperors who sat on the throne some were duds, some were mediocre, but a considerable number were men of the very highest ability; few of them died in bed, but "though there were sixty-five revolutions not one of them was directed against the system as such."

Not more than half the book is analysis; Miss Diener then sets down some of the stories from Byzantine history—mostly from the imperial family—which the twentieth-century reader might well digest to make himself realize how little of the world's history has resembled the progressive optimism of the nineteenth century or the "smooth and settled temper" of the eighteenth. Such a story as that of the Emperor Andronicus Comnenus, for instance, is more wildly fantastic than anything in the "Arabian Nights"; yet it is true (Gibbon gives it in more detail than Miss Diener) and it happened to the ruler of the most powerful state in the world. If we are slipping back into an age of irrationality and violence, we are no more than reverting to the normal lot of man.

The Criminal Record

In the absence of new detective fiction this week, the Hon. Judge lists the nine best of the year

Title and Author	*Summing Up*
THE FASHION IN SHROUDS *Margery Allingham* (Crime Club: $2.)	Albert Campion at his shrewdest as a sleuth, glittering background of London gown-shops and gaudy restaurants, galaxy of interesting characters and first-class writing.
FAST COMPANY *Marco Page* (Dodd Mead: $2.)	Tough goings-on in the rare-book biz, a detective—and his wife—who can deduce and wisecrack at top-speed, dialogue that crackles, and an A1 puzzle.
THE CROOKED HINGE *John Dickson Carr* (Harpers: $2.)	Aura of supernatural around quite mundane but mystifying murder of claimant to old English estate adds triple zest to marvelously well-spun puzzle for adipose Dr. Fell.
MURDER ON SAFARI *Elspeth Huxley* (Harpers: $2.)	Complete education in big-game hunting (African); delightfully obnoxious tycoons—American and English; robbery, murder, and a jungleful of excitement.
LAMENT FOR A MAKER *Michael Innes* (Dodd Mead: $2.)	Eerie Scottish castle houses eccentric laird who goes boomp over battlements. Continuously creepy chapters lead to totally unexpected ending and all is braw—but for the tale-bearing rats.
DEATH FROM A TOP HAT *Clayton Rawson* (Putnam: $2.)	Ex-Magicker Merlini manipulates coins while solving strange deaths of occultist and card-trickster. Huge amount of fascinating facts on magicians, much humor, and a hurricane finish.
A PUZZLE IN POISON *Anthony Berkeley* (Crime Club: $2.)	Death—by arsenic—of retired English engineer brings numerous nice people under suspicion. Detectives clear them all but an amateur comes to conclusion that leaves reader agasp.
THE WALL *Mary Roberts Rinehart* (Farrar&Rinehart: $2.)	Divorcee, lurking round ex-husband's seaside home, slain with golf club. Other deaths, and romance, follow—all satisfactorily solved in spite of clues left hanging.
WARRANT FOR X *Philip McDonald* (Crime Club: $2.)	American playwright on London holiday overhears plot, almost gets bumped off before Anthony Gethryn, in class A comeback, nails plotters.

For Musical Amateurs

THE OXFORD COMPANION TO MUSIC. By Percy A. Scholes. New York: Oxford University Press. 1938. $6.50.

Reviewed by PAUL HENRY LANG

THIS is evidently the year of musical encyclopedias. We have hardly recovered from the shock suffered from reading the first of the brace, a miserable compilation, when the second, this time by a British editor, is offered to the public, with still another American work just off the press.* It should be said at the outset that the "Oxford Companion to Music" is a respectable manual and, once the reader has steadied his nerves after beholding the "new portrait" of Beethoven which adorns the frontispiece, he will find a lively, informative, chatty sequence of articles, profusely illustrated, and covering a wide range of musical subjects. On the whole, the volume is much better than the average run of lexicons for the use of the general public.

The reviewer's task would end here, were it not for the author's assertion in the preface that "old literature and long-bygone musical journals . . . have been searched in the endeavor to obtain light upon details of musical life which are ordinarily ignored by the historians and encyclopedists of music." This remark as well as the general tone of the preface indicates that the author claims scholarly aims and qualities for his work. In fact, the author is guilty of the very offense he intended to remedy: he has ignored a great many findings of musical historians and encyclopedists. Throughout the work, we often miss the results of modern musical research commonly known to serious students of music. It is unpardonable to give a succinct history of the opera by jumping from Monteverdi to Gluck and leaving out the great figures of Baroque opera such as Cavalli, Cesti, Rossi, and many others, or to give characterizations such as "Mozart's art was founded on that of Haydn as that of Haydn had been on that of Emanuel Bach." The history of these great masters and their music is not so simple as that. Similarly, Schubert's musical style is explained in the following lapidary fashion: "He was Beethoven's contemporary in Vienna (twenty-seven years his junior) and like Beethoven he represents the classical school of Haydn and Mozart carried forward into the opening of the 'Romantic Period.'" In the more technical articles, injudicious use of material and lack of scholarly information is often embarrassing. And finally, we must protest the omission of even a rudimentary bibliography. As a popular manual, the book is commendable, but it cannot be considered a reference volume for scholarly work.

* To be reviewed next week.—*Ed.*

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The Columbia Milton

THE WORKS OF JOHN MILTON. Edited by Frank Allen Patterson. New York: Columbia University Press. 18 vols. in 21 books. Library edition, $105. Special edition, $315.

Reviewed by ALEXANDER M. WITHERSPOON

WITH the publication of Volume XVIII, which contains the uncollected writings and certain doubtful pieces, the Columbia University Press brings to fulfilment, thirty years after its inception, the first really complete edition of Milton, an edition which represents the greatest monument to Milton's genius and perhaps the greatest single monument to American scholarship.

It is not likely that the present edition will ever be superseded, for, both in the care expended on the text and in the amount of the material included, it is as nearly definitive as it is possible to make it. The editors have included in the first seventeen volumes all Milton's prose and poetry that they consider genuine, and in the concluding volume they have put in every phrase and word that can be assigned to Milton otherwise, in wills, deeds, letters or portions of letters, annotations in the margins of books, and even in records of conversations. They have gone on the principle that everything that came from Milton's pen is at least of biographical importance. There are, therefore, many items which appear here for the first time in print, among them an English translation of Milton's small treatise on logic, which he published in 1672, and several letters from the Columbia Manuscript. The editors have paid scrupulous attention to the variants in the texts, even to the *minutiae* of type, punctuation, and spelling. If the variants are not always highly important, such painstaking labor will, at least, not have to be done again. Students of Milton's Latin poems rejoice that here for the first time these poems appear without a flaw. Readers specially interested in "Paradise Lost" will be grateful for the settling of certain textual problems in Book I. Throughout both the Latin and the English poems the editors have tried to represent Milton's true intentions, and from now on the Columbia Milton will undoubtedly be accepted, with perhaps a few exceptions, as the correct text of both the poetry and the prose.

The earlier volumes of the series have already been reviewed in these columns, and it remains only to survey briefly the edition in its entirety. The physical beauty of the volumes as represented in design, printing, and binding, is due chiefly to the genius of William Edwin Rudge, and from first to last the edition constitutes what must be one of the most externally beautiful works of scholarship in the world. The multitudinous notes and variant readings have not been allowed to spoil the beauty of the pages or to impede the text, but have been placed at the ends of the volumes. The Latin verse and prose are accompanied by English translations printed on the opposite page.

As one surveys the edition, one begins to realize the enormous amount of scholarship that has gone into the study of Milton during the past thirty years, and the great part that American scholars, notably the members of the Columbia editorial board, have had in it. In looking through the notes to the volumes one is also struck by the great variety and quantity of Miltoniana in American libraries and collections. The frontispiece of the edition, for example, is a superb reproduction of the Janssen portrait of Milton at the age of ten, one of the chief Miltonic treasures now in the United States. The invaluable manuscript of the first book of "Paradise Lost," which was used by the editors, is in the Morgan Library in New York. Of particular interest is the Columbia Manuscript previously mentioned, which is the sole authority for ten English State letters and one other of uncertain authorship, now printed for the first time in Volume XIII. Since the publication of the last volume of the edition, the Yale University Library has acquired a copy of the first issue of the original English translation in black letter of "A Declaration of His Highness . . . Against Spain," 1655, in which Milton may have had a hand, and for the text of which the Columbia editors had to depend on a photostatic copy of the document in the British Museum.

It would be too much to expect that in an edition of such magnitude and of such varied materials there should be no errors. Some textual readings should be reconsidered, perhaps, particularly in the Latin prose, which offered the greatest difficulties to the editors, and the translations of which are the least successful portions of the edition. The proofs of Milton's Latin prose seem not to have been too well read, and although there is abundant evidence of the care which the editors have taken with the text, there is a general tendency to accept the work of the seventeenth-century printers as perfect, and such it can hardly have been. Nevertheless, however considered, the Columbia Milton, now happily complete, is at once a tribute to Columbia and its editors in particular, to American scholarship in general, and above all to the genius of John Milton, who was, after all, its only begetter.

Chestertoniana

THE COLOURED LANDS. By G. K. Chesterton. New York: Sheed & Ward. 1938. $3.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

LORD MACAULAY once said of some unlucky passage in the writings of Southey: "A sensible man might have thought of such a joke; a sensible man might even have uttered it in casual conversation; but that a man otherwise sensible should write it out and send it to the printer, and correct it in proof, and send it back, to go down to posterity under his name—this makes one despair of human nature." But often, for one reason or another, a man may write and send to a magazine, or even write and leave in his desk, some idea which he afterwards works over more successfully, or some intentionally ephemeral trifle; and it is left to well-meaning literary executors to comb pigeon-holes and magazine files, collect these fugitive pieces, and pillory them between covers.

The late Gilbert Chesterton, with his extravagant vitality, was peculiarly liable to the sort of disservice that has been done him in this volume. It is made up of verses, sketches, one or two burlesque fairy tales, and a number of the exuberant drawings in black and white and some in color, which he was so fond of making; most of them belong to his younger days, and one or two to his schooldays. In general, they show, not the deeper traits, but most of the shallower ones which we know so well in the whole mass of Chesterton's work: a delight in the grotesque and fantastic, an insistence on the necessity of the faculty of wonder, and also the truly Elizabethan fondness for hunting a pun to death through three pages. If we had never heard of Chesterton, we should feel that in this book we encountered a unique personality and a great gusto; but Chesterton was always throwing off rockets, and these dead sticks should have been left to lie where they fell.

"It will take me at least two years to arrange the (Mark Twain) papers; it will take me a good deal more than two years to extract from them what is important for the study and criticism of Mark Twain."—*Bernard DeVoto in The Saturday Review of Literature, December 10, 1938.*

Meanwhile the best book to give you the background for all future studies of Mark Twain is

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The Curse of Obscurity

MAULE'S CURSE: SEVEN STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN OBSCURANTISM. By Yvor Winters. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions. 1938. $3.

Reviewed by ETHEL M. THORNBURY

THE title of these new essays by Professor Winters is taken from the scene in "The House of Seven Gables" where the condemned Maule addresses Colonel Pyncheon from the scaffold: "God will give him blood to drink." This is interpreted by Mr. Winters thus: ". . . in the name of God, they [the Puritans] had violently cut themselves off from human nature; in the end . . . more than one of them drank of his own heart's blood." Maule's curse is thus a symbol of human as opposed to non-human values, and American writers have failed to develop their fullest powers because they have failed to grasp fully the intellectual problems inherent in human values. The resulting obscurity, partly accidental in Hawthorne's later romances, has become a principle of expression in succeeding writers. Mr. Winters analyzes the work of Cooper, Melville, Poe, Emerson, Jones Very, Emily Dickinson, and Henry James in an attempt to trace the ways in which Maule's curse is fulfilled.

He is not very successful in his endeavor to fit the writers whom he analyzes into the critical pattern which he has defined. The precise significance of the curse is never made completely clear. In his discussion of Hawthorne, Mr. Winters says:

> It is in this generation and the next that we see most clearly and bitterly the realization of Maule's prophecy. These men were cut off from their heritage, . . . and were abnormally sensitive to the influence of European Romanticism. In Emerson the terms of New England mysticism and of Romantic amoralism were fused and confused so inextricably that we have not yet worked ourselves free of them. In Poe, a man born without a background, New England or any other, Romantic doctrine was introduced directly, in a form free of theological terminology, but in a form none the less which would tend in the long run to support the influence of Emerson.

It is difficult to decide what this means. How can two things be both fused and confused? And how can a man who has no background support an influence which somehow grew out of a special background, merely by using doctrines which had been used by writers with the special background? These things are not clear, nor is the symbolism any clearer wherever Mr. Winters applies his analysis to the individual writer. On the other hand, where he neglects the symbolism, much of his writing is very illuminating. He courageously attacks Poe's reputation as critic and poet so that no reader of "Maule's Curse" could read what the author has to say of Poe without wishing to go once more through Poe's criticism; and the chances are he will have to admit that much of what Mr. Winters has said is profoundly true. Similarly, one receives fresh insight into the writings of Cooper and of Melville. Jones Very, the strange mystic who was Emerson's contemporary, is made to live, and his poetry is given the appreciation it deserves. (A selection of Very's poems is given in an appendix.) The treatment of Emerson and of Henry James is less penetrating and marred by a kind of antagonism toward, or failure of perception about, their work which will certainly not satisfy admirers of those writers.

He pictures Emerson as a respectable New England parson of excellent habits, kindly impulses, and small intellectual power. That Emerson fathered not only modern philosophical pragmatism but also the less desirable practical pragmatism of the American business man is probably true. But Emerson, though remarkable chiefly for flashes of insight, was still a penetrating thinker. Mr. Winters's treatment of Henry James is even less satisfactory. He seems here and there to imply that Mrs. Wharton's "Age of Innocence" has a clearer vision of human nature than anything James ever wrote —a view which seems to this reviewer to mistake organized superficiality for profound analysis. His estimate of James and other great novelists, past and present, reveal very little appreciation of the novel as a form of art.

Altogether, though "Maule's Curse" has some illuminating criticism, it itself affords a study of obscurantism.

Ethel M. Thornbury is on the faculty of Sarah Lawrence College.

An Artist's Africa

FRONTIERS OF ENCHANTMENT. By W. R. Leigh. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1938. $3.

Reviewed by HASSOLDT DAVIS

MR. LEIGH'S book fulfills its single purpose admirably: it presents the esthetic Africa, the Africa of an artist who had no interest in slaughter or trail-blazing. On his two expeditions to paint backgrounds for the Habitat Groups of African Hall in the American Museum of Natural History Mr. Leigh concerned himself entirely with the faithful rendering of the land in terms of beauty. He belittles the hardships of his own work, the swamp miasmas rolling with insects, the long treks, the heat of the lowlands when his paint melted, and the cold of the mountains, when it would not flow. It must have been a gruelling job to sit still before the canvas knowing that a dozen gorillas were the hidden audience of his art, or that the black buffaloes, his models and the most dangerous animals in the world, might at any moment decide to reduce him to fragments the size of a half dollar. He would hesitate to slay the gorilla, our remote kinsman, "because it would seem too much like murder," and even the hyena he came to regard tolerably.

The beauty of the book is that it makes Africa as vivid in words as in the excellent pen-and-ink illustrations. The voiceless giraffe raises his head athwart the rose-lemon sky, the parasite fig vine throttles its host, and these are convincing as vital individuals rather than decorations for museum or zoo.

Letters to the Editor

(*Continued from page 9*)

The "when" is "never" if you think that seizure of "total power temporarily" (Ella Winter's phrase for the "how") is going to lead to democratic equalization of opportunities. Ella Winter thinks Lenin acted "when" necessary to achieve "it." I will admit that Lenin acted "when" necessary, but because of his "how" the "it" has not been achieved, Nor can "it" be achieved by the State which seizes all the means and materials of production, thus effectively denying philosophical anarchists (such as myself) the right to make their own living if they happen to dislike what the State is doing. If Ella Winter doesn't like the tag "employer State" I am sorry. But I know no other way to give content to the ectoplasmic phrase, "removal of economic privilege," when it is a question of the totalitarian way of trying to achieve "it."

I regret that my tone has offended Ella Winter. For I would be the very last person to deny that Steffens was a great personality and the best reporter that ever worked for an American magazine.

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN.

New York City.

The 1815 Hurricane

SIR:—Your publication on December 3rd of my letter, connecting Oliver Wendell Holmes's poem, "The September Gale," with the hurricane which swept New England in September, 1815, has brought to me letters which have changed the conjecture into certainty. Mr. Harry A. Wright of Springfield, Mass., pointed out that in the Riverside edition of Holmes's works, published in 1895, Holmes prefaced the poem with a note about the hurricane, and added that he had included some of his recollections of the great storm in an article, "The Seasons," published in "Pages from an Old Volume of Life." This contains many details.

Dr. Holmes dated the hurricane September 23, 1815—not the 18th or the 21st, as the other sources indicated. His date is confirmed by contemporary newspapers to which I have since had access.

Mr. John M. Shaw of South Orange, N. J., remarks on the fact that the stanza quoted in my letter,

> Oh, how the ponds and rivers boiled!
> They seemed like bursting craters!
> And oaks were scattered on the ground
> As if they were p'taters.

reads, in his copy of the first edition of the poem,

> Lord! how the ponds and rivers boiled,
> And how the shingles rattled.
> And oaks were scattered on the ground
> As if the Titans battled.

He asks which is the earlier version.

Evidently his is. All editions of Holmes's poems through the Blue and Gold of 1862 have the stanza in his form. The next collected edition, the Household edition of 1877, changed the lines to those I have quoted.

EDWARD SMITH PARSONS,
President Emeritus,
Marietta College.

Cambridge, Mass.

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The New Books

Biography

CHARLES LAUGHTON AND I. By Elsa Lanchester. Harcourt, Brace. 1938. $3.50.

This is the story of a stage-struck boy, born in Scarborough, England, and of a stage-struck girl, born at Clapham Common. Boy and girl met, some ten or twelve years ago, they married, and since then they have done pretty well for themselves in the make-believe world of the theater and the cinema. Miss Lanchester, who is Mrs. Charles Laughton, tells the tale with artlessness and even innocence, a tale that shuttles back and forth from London to Hollywood, from stage to screen. There is nothing in it to hold a reader who does not happen to be especially interested in Mr. and Mrs. Laughton, their achievements, and their friends; but its lack of pretension is its defense against unkind criticism. It is the sort of guileless record that one might jot down for the entertainment of an invalid great-aunt. Miss Lanchester has nothing profound to say about the theater and nothing illuminating to say about Hollywood, and her anecdotes and gossip are small beer; but she does, perhaps unconsciously, give us a revelation of that curiously infantile and insulated world, with its immature values, in which nine out of ten actors live, make up, and have their being. "Charles Laughton and I" may be read so easily that one need exert no effort whatsoever, save to remind oneself occasionally that one is reading at all.

B. R. R.

International

THE CHAMBERLAIN TRADITION. By Sir Charles Petrie. Stokes. 1938. $2.50.

Sir Charles Petrie, distinguished English historian, presents in this volume as effective a case for the Munich truce as can be made at the present time. In a completely laudatory biography of the three Chamberlains, he portrays Mr. Neville Chamberlain as a warm-hearted and energetic statesman who is fulfilling Britain's major interests by observance of the high standards—"leadership, courage, initiative, and realism"—of his famous family. The sacrifice of Czechoslovakia became inevitable, according to this analysis, once it was apparent that Hitler would fight rather than retreat from his demands. The intransigence of the Czech government, the weakness of Britain, and the dynamic nationalism of Germany combined to make "peaceful appeasement" necessary. Determined to mitigate the ideological conflict which threatens to destroy Europe, Mr. Chamberlain is moving swiftly and audaciously toward a general settlement between the democracies and dictatorships.

This account of the Prime Minister appears as transparently partisan as the preceding chapters on his father, Joseph Chamberlain, and his half-brother, Sir Austen Chamberlain. The historical whitewash is too glaring, for every available fact and interpretation is twisted to praise the Chamberlains and to disparage their opponents. Sir Charles Petrie warmly defends Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's handling of the Irish and Boer questions, which embittered imperial relations and damaged British prestige for a generation. He writes with equal enthusiasm of Sir Austen Chamberlain's triumph at Locarno, without examining the effect of his Francophil attitude upon European affairs. Although this effort to humanize three unpopular statesmen does not quite succeed, it manages to suggest the importance of the Chamberlains as representatives of middle-class business men and organizers of a modern party machine. Biased presentation and significant omissions hardly contribute, however, to knowledge of the Chamberlains or respect for their biographer.

J. F. G.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 247)

PHYLLIS McGINLEY—ICONOCLAST

I leave you, my elders and betters,
Intoning your hedonist psalms.
. . . . . .
I'm going to have Scruples,
I'm going to have Morals,
I'll even have qualms.
I'm going Victorian, wildly Victorian,
Boldly intent on my Q's and my P's,
. . . . . .
Monogamous, too, if I please.

(From "One More Manhattan," by permission of Harcourt, Brace & Co.)

Miscellaneous

INVISIBLE STRIPES. By Warden Lewis E. Lawes. Farrar & Rinehart. 1938. $2.50.

Warden Lawes concerns himself in this book with the roots of crime in our social and economic life, with the prisoner and his mental reaction to prison life, and with his struggle after he goes out, bearing the "invisible stripes" of the ex-convict. His opening chapters are devoted to the diary of a prisoner, described by him as "one of the most eloquent documents that has ever emanated from the walls of Sing Sing." That seems to us too high an estimate of what is an interesting diary but one that does not probe very deeply into the heart of Sing Sing and that often sinks to the level of mediocrity in content and style.

In his attempt to answer the questions the diarist asks and those arising from his thirty-four years in prison work, Warden Lawes discusses the "subsurface Sing Sing" and especially the subsurface fear of what lies beyond prison walls, the "fear that the forces which catapulted them into Sing Sing are waiting at the gates to resume their hold upon them." He defends parole vigorously, but shows how it must be strengthened. He calls on the public for a square deal for the released prisoner.

Turning to the origin of crime, he discusses the complexity, rigidity, and stupidity of much of our legal code, and then answers the question "Why do they come here in the first place?" in terms of parents, the schools, and the churches. In a chapter on "Youth in the Making" he describes various methods of crime prevention.

There is nothing particularly new in his discussion of these subjects, but Warden Lawes brings together a well-selected assortment of the soundest current ideas on the causes and prevention of crime, and puts the force of vigorous words and the weight of his long experience behind them.

A. McC.

THE FIVE SISTERS. By William E. Blatz. Morrow. 1938. $2.50.

Those who are eager to follow the records of the Dionne quintuplets will read with interest the new book by Dr. William Blatz, who has been their instructor in training and supervisor of the studies made of them. A résumé of their development through their fourth birthday, the book records "what has been done in their pre-school years to prepare them for the years ahead."

We have been assured, in Dr. Blatz's earlier and more technical reports, of the painstaking scientific supervision surrounding these children. The present book tends to confirm the human aspect of the nursery which has been the home of the quintuplets for all but the first four months. "How alike are these children?" is a matter of scientific importance. "How different can these children become as individuals?" may help to determine their life happiness. One reads in Dr. Blatz's clear, at times dramatic, prose of the careful and tireless effort with which the environment and all available freedom is being utilized to develop each of these children as an individual.

The book has a certain inconsistency of style, ranging from excellent, pungent descriptions of the children's training and

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progress under modern nursery school procedure, to a labored, much less convincing theoretical discussion of the obviously effective principles. Dr. Blatz speaks of "the attitudes, the appetities, the emotions" in a precise manner that will not find universal acceptance. However, the illustrations and the graphic word-pictures prove how successfully human beings, especially children, adapt methods to their needs. Dr. Blatz gives generous credit to the nurses and teachers who have assisted him in the practical execution of his thoughtful plans.

The book is excellently and fully illustrated with charts showing various aspects of the children's progress. As a simply technical and easily readable account of the Dionne Quintuplets through their fourth birthday, it should have a popular appeal to their host of friends.

F. E.

MINNESOTA: A STATE GUIDE. Compiled and written by the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration. Viking. 1938. $2.50.

The effort to achieve novelty in the American Guide series, which must be driving many administrators of Writers' projects slowly mad, is achieved in this one by the urbane and affable tone in which it undertakes to criticize Minnesota's foibles as well as to celebrate its triumphs. Minnesota is pictured as a vigorous youngster among the states, full of eagerness for accomplishment, but often youthfully inconsistent in its pursuit of mutually exclusive ideals.

In its general structure, the book follows the pattern of other guides, devoting the greater number of its pages to historical sketches and industrial surveys. An authoritative and able editorial hand quite evidently has managed to give a unity of temper to all the chapters. An air of brisk, explorative clear-sightedness is maintained throughout.

For the benefit of the many motorists who travel through Minnesota's "land of the ten thousand lakes" during the summer months, tours that are to be made by canoe, as well as those to be made by car, have been well outlined. A collection of handsome, representative photographs is grouped at the front of the book. Spirited and charming drawings at the head of each chapter serve to introduce the theme of the text.

J. G.

Science

THE SCIENTIST IN ACTION. A SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF HIS METHODS. By William H. George. Emerson Books. 1938. $3.

Intended primarily as a critique of the scientific method, this volume is concerned with the nature of the scientific "experiment," the definition of fact, the use of postulates and hypotheses, the validity of the principle of causality, and the important question of the nature of "reality." The author, a physicist by profession, brings to the problems of philosophy unusual originality and penetration, and presents them with equally unusual simplicity.

One of the more interesting features of the book consists of the interpolation of several highly original chapters on psychology, dealing with the nature of perception, with the role of pattern in our psychic activity and with kindred problems; chapters that, in addition to being very interesting in themselves, are quite germane to the principal theme. Another interesting feature is the author's treatment of what he calls "pattern properties," that is, those features of matter such as relation, configuration, symmetry, which exist only by virtue of organization. These pattern properties are in part, at least, what is meant by some philosophers when they assert that the "whole is greater than the sum of the parts," a fundamental doctrine of so-called Emergent Evolution. The confusion in the writings of others on this important problem is avoided by Professor George by his clear thinking and by close adherence to the fundamental definitions laid down in the earlier chapters.

We know of no other book that covers as broad a field in as simple, straightforward and attractive a manner, and we would recommend it highly to anyone who has enjoyed reading Eddington, Jeans, Levy, or others who have written on the nature of the physical universe.

H. W. S.

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INFORMATION, PLEASE . . . Which New York City hotel appeals to literary people because it is near riding trails and ponds and trees; away from traffic's jangling tangle; yet only across the street from the Hayden Planetarium, two minutes from the American Museum of Natural History, and fifteen each from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the New York Public Library in the heart of town? The answer is the Hotel Standish Hall, situated just off Central Park at 45 West 81st Street. Several rooms cost no more than one at many midtown caravansaries. Newly furnished and decorated 1 room apartment and suites—parlor, bedroom, bath—from $75 to $190 a month. Rate by the day or week as well. Kitchens in the suites have breakfast nooks, refrigerators and gas stoves for those who wish to practice their local cookery. But the hotel has an excellent dining room. (Caution: Make 1939 World's Fair reservations early.) Please identify yourself as an SRL reader when writing. Harry A. Day, Manager.

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Double-Crostics: No. 248

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

1-V	2-L	3-R	■	4-S	5-Q	6-M	7-W	8-V	9-X	10-O	11-N	12-A	13-L	14-G	15-C	■	16-K
17-H	18-M	19-V	■	20-K	21-D	22-A	■	23-T	24-B	25-L	26-Q	27-O	28-L	■	29-T	30-S	31-V
32-F	33-C	34-G	35-A	36-I	■	37-E	38-L	39-K	40-I	41-V	42-C	43-P	44-J	45-S	46-O	47-G	■
48-N	49-M	50-Q	■	51-I	52-F	53-L	54-J	55-C	56-S	57-E	58-A	59-G	60-R	61-P	62-H	63-T	■
64-O	65-U	66-J	67-W	68-K	69-V	70-Q	71-D	■	72-E	73-G	74-W	75-L	■	76-D	77-A	■	78-N
79-Q	80-C	■	81-F	82-I	83-M	■	84-I	85-J	86-L	87-M	88-D	89-F	90-E	91-B	92-K	93-N	■
94-D	95-N	96-M	■	97-G	98-I	99-N	100-P	101-Q	102-T	103-V	104-L	105-R	106-B	107-U	108-E	109-F	■
110-W	111-A	112-C	■	113-Q	114-C	■	115-R	116-N	117-D	■	118-U	119-F	120-X	■	121-D	122-R	123-N
■	124-X	125-T	126-A	127-N	■	128-V	129-D	130-S	■	131-Q	132-G	133-B	134-M	135-C	136-E	■	137-N
138-V	139-F	140-H	■	141-J	142-U	■	143-S	144-N	145-T	146-W	■	147-O	148-L	149-V	150-S	151-I	152-E
153-P	154-R	155-X	■	156-J	157-W	158-R	159-X	160-B	■	161-W	162-D	163-Q	■	164-H	165-K	■	166-L
167-K	168-W	169-R	170-I	■	171-K	172-E	173-J	■	174-E	175-I	176-R	177-N	■	178-S	179-K	180-C	181-D
182-H	183-I	■	184-F	185-M	■	186-S	187-M	188-T	189-J	190-D	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-four words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 21 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
A. Extracted forcibly.	22 58 111 126 77 35 12
B. Bumpkins.	24 133 106 91 160
C. Intricate.	55 114 42 180 135 33 112 80 15
D. Founder of ancient Persian religion.	88 94 71 162 190 21 181 129 121 117 76
E. A downcast state.	108 152 72 136 37 174 57 172 90
F. Second Governor of Plymouth Colony.	184 52 119 81 32 89 109 139
G. To take up the cause of.	132 47 97 59 73 34 14
H. Very remote region.	164 17 62 182 140
I. Arbitrary.	170 82 51 175 84 151 40 183 98 36
J. A species of luminous insect.	66 189 141 173 156 85 44 54
K. Phoenician goddess of war.	92 20 171 16 165 39 167 68 179
L. Immediately.	28 75 86 38 104 13 2 166 25 53 148
M. Novel by Stevenson.	6 87 96 49 18 187 134 185 83
N. Relating to alms giving.	11 93 116 123 137 144 78 127 95 48 99 177
O. Full of vigor.	10 46 147 64 27
P. An aerial maneuver.	153 61 43 100
Q. London street.	5 79 101 26 131 163 113 50 70
R. Sought out with care.	60 3 105 122 176 158 169 115 154
S. State of keeping at a distance.	4 150 30 45 143 56 130 186 178
T. Subtle variations.	125 145 23 102 29 188 63
U. A layer.	142 65 107 118
V. Bizarre.	8 128 19 149 138 31 103 41 1 69
W. A skeleton.	146 168 161 110 157 7 67 74
X. Slovenly.	155 124 9 159 120

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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

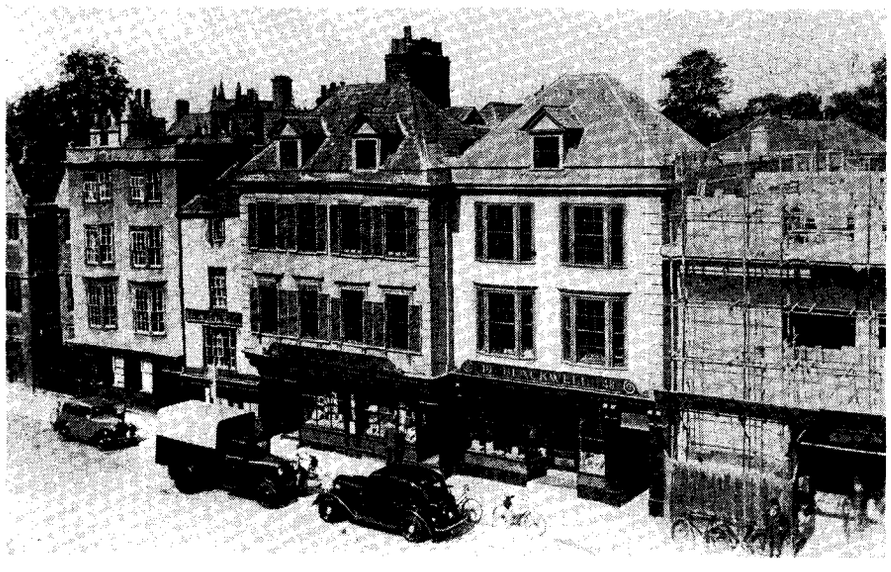
"A STORY in letter form that ranks with De Maupassant" was *Story* magazine's terse description of Kressmann Taylor's *Address Unknown.* We hope that Simon & Schuster, when they publish it in book form, will be equally astute and reserved: this powerful little bomb will lose much of its explosive force if the reader knows beforehand what to expect. ☞Richard Hughes, writing from Laugharne Castle, Carmarthenshire (Wales), takes issue with William McFee's review of *In Hazard* in the N. Y. *Sun*, from which we quoted here (Nov. 12). Mr. Hughes says: "I do not for one moment accept McFee's technical criticisms. No other seaman has pretended to find the mistakes McFee says are so obvious: and every single review which has appeared in a technical journal (e.g., the *Merchant Navy Journal*, the *Journal of Commerce and Shipping Telegraph, Lloyd's List and Shipping Gazette*, and *The Fleet*) has remarked on the book's technical accuracy." ☞Nothing is more exciting than to start an agitation on "points" among bibliographers: let us remark then, with an eye on Mr. Walter Hill of Chicago, who lists a fine copy of McFee's *Casuals of the Sea*, that our own has the 18 pp. of advertisements at the end, but the 3rd of these reads "MARTIN SECKER His Complete Catalogue MCMXV." ☞A perfect place to pursue this sort of biblioquibbling frolic, and a rich plum pudding of anecdote, humor, and critical spice is John T. Winterich's *23 Books and the Stories Behind Them*, just issued (only 650 copies for sale) by the Book Arts Club of the University of California, for $5. This admirable book grew out of Mr. Winterich's series of articles in the *Publishers' Weekly*. The Book Arts Club, a group of California students zealous about bookmaking, urged him to expand them to greater length, which he has done with felicitous results. There is scarcely another man writing about book-lore with so happy a blend of mirth and scholarship. Among many passages of gaiety we relish particularly his remark that *Petites Femmes* would not do at all for the French title of *Little Women*. ☞We rather wish that in his mention of various editions of *Gulliver's Travels* Mr. Winterich had thought to mention the drawings by Charles E. Brock in Macmillan's edition (the famous old *Cranford* series, honored by every bookseller worthy the name). ☞Volumes of the old *Cranford* series (illustrated mostly by Hugh Thomson, Caldecott, Walter Crane, and Brock) were the kind of Christmas presents that made the 1890's happy.

☞Few books published in 1938 contain more of the meat of merriment, for their own kind of reader, than Columbia University's two-volume reprint of Thomas Fuller, *The Holy State and the Profane State* (1642) edited by Maximilian G. Walten. The first volume contains a biographical essay and full notes, the second is a facsimile reprint of the 1642 edition. We are astonished to learn from Mr. Walten's preface that "one or two recent critics" have believed Fuller to be "an unctuous bore." And then suddenly we remember the astonishment and tedium of readers of a New York newspaper some 15 years ago when we used to fill our space with large slabs of quotation from Fuller. You can't please everyone, and we long ago quit trying. ☞For $7 you can get these two handsome volumes from the Columbia Press, and smile in quiet the rest of your life—if you smile the way Charles Lamb did.

☞Peter Greig, the old wassailmonger, says the crew of the *Leviathan* on her last voyage had no right to complain because they were given Boiled Turkey. Boiling the noble bird, Peter says, is an old Yorkshire custom. ☞Mr. Greig describes (in his *Wine and Food Newsletter*) the wines he is going to serve himself for Christmas. If we were still drinking wine (are you there, Drs. Brown and Eyerly of the Gastro-Enterological Society?) it would likely be *Chateau Yquem* in memory of Montaigne, who came of the Yquem family. The traditional New Year's beaker in the Quercus family is *Bishop*, in the following proportions: yolks of 4 eggs well beaten, add a quart of hot milk, and then a quart of Scots whiskey; bring to a vivacious simmer; sweeten with confectioner's sugar (or honey), serve with grated nutmeg. ☞After this, mend the fire and read aloud a few pages of the *Phaedo*. ☞Speaking of good grub, a menu that deserves commemoration was that of the New England Breakfast given (at the Waldorf) by the Limited Editions Club in honor of Mr. Van Wyck Brooks; to whom the Club awarded its gold medal for his *The Flowering of New England*. The specialties were Codfish Cakes, Cold Baked Beans, Apple Pie, Marmalade, Parker House Rolls and Johnny Cake. ☞The award was for the American book of the last three years "which is considered most nearly to attain the stature of a classic." J. Donald Adams, Clifton Fadiman and Robert Cantwell were the selecting committee.

☞The Columbia Broadcasting System has printed another remarkable album, called *Crisis*, which reprints 471 CBS broadcasts "from 18 world centers" made during the days September 12 to 30. It is an extraordinary record, with only one comical *gaffe*—where they refer (headline, p. 57) to Sir Walter Smiles as "Sir Smiles." ☞The 1939 *Old Farmer's Almanac* (its 147th year) has adopted as its emblem a statuette of a woodchuck (or groundhog) carved by Katharine Lane of Boston—in virtue "of his qualifications as weather prophet." ☞*The Good Earth*, first we have seen of Mr. De Graff's new *Pocket Books* at 25 cents each (there is a tryout list of 52 titles) is excellently printed and most attractive in every way. There is a surprising note at the end, where the more expensive editions of the same book are listed and an unusual offer is made: "Return the last 30 pages of this book which will comprise a 25 cents part payment against the price of the edition you want." ☞We should be sorry to spoil so attractive a little volume even to save a quarter.

☞Lowell Thomas mispronounced *hegemony* on the radio. ☞We hear that the U. S. Department of Commerce publishes a wonderful work on Cartography, but have been too busy to write and inquire. If we were still a bookseller we would keep an assorted stock of the remarkable and inexpensive publications of the U. S. Government, far too little known. ☞Booksellers spend too much energy in telling people what they know already, instead of telling them what they don't know and need. ☞There isn't space to discuss it as it deserves, but a book that would be an ideal gift for anyone wishing to reconsider and think is *The Victorians and After, 1830-1914* by Bonamy Dobree and E. C. Batho (McBride, $2.50). This is a provocative survey; fresh, pungent, condensed, packed with unexpected information. For instance, we admit with embarrassment we had never known about Robert Eyres Landor, the brother of Walter Savage.



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